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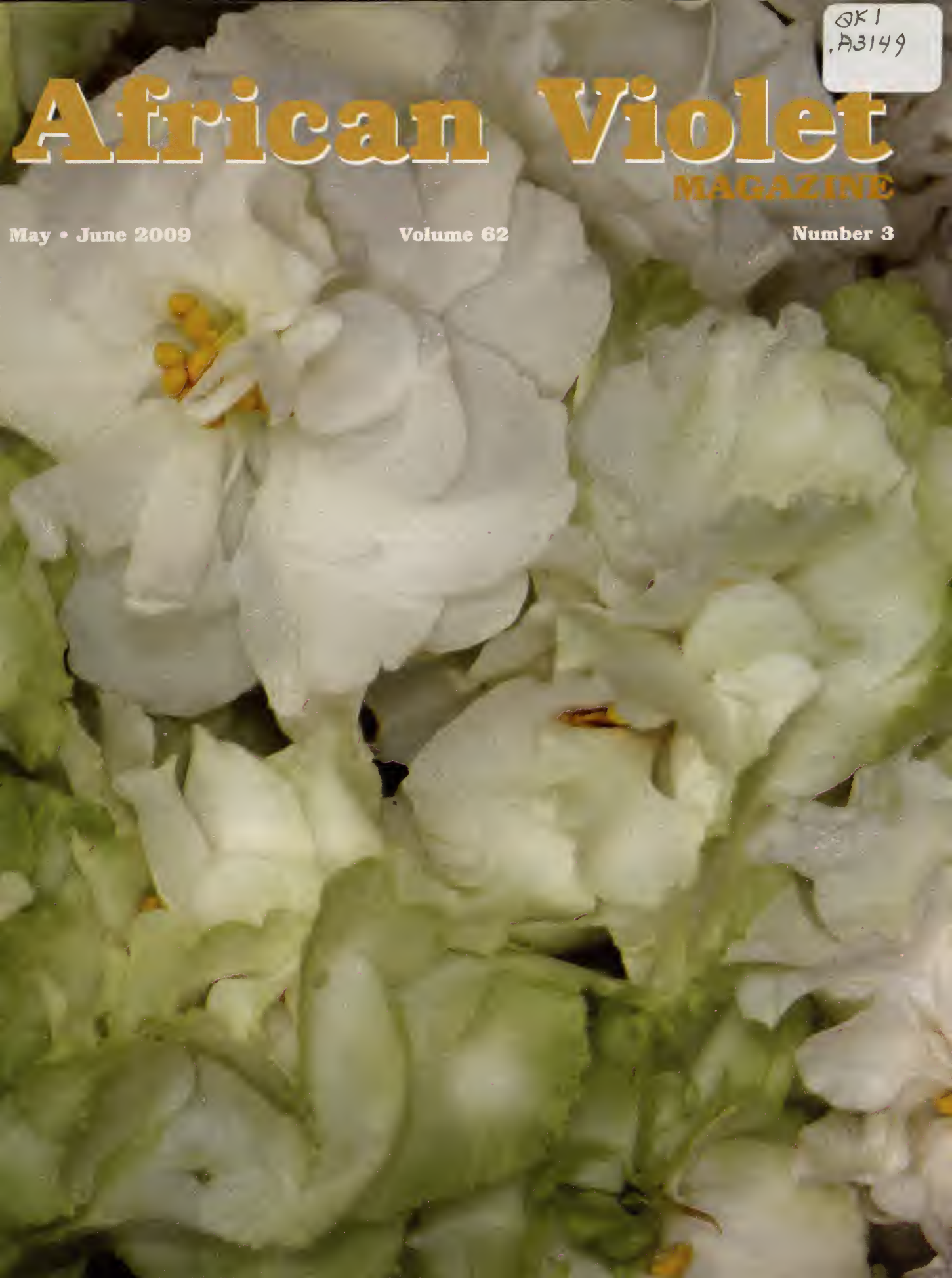
African Violet MAGAZINE

May • June 2009 Volume 62 Number 3



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SHOW SCHEDULE APPROVER: For information on Shows, AVSA Awards, and Approving Schedules write to: Meredith Hall, P. O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. *E-mail* <mhall370@earthlink.net>. **Do not send Show Schedules by E-mail - this address is for information ONLY.** Please check for new prices on AVSA Show Packets.

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AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE INFORMATION

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ARTICLES BY MEMBERS, COLUMNISTS AND MEMORIALS: Send to Editor.

Please Note: Deadlines - Articles and Columnists: Jan. issue - Oct. 1; Mar. issue - Dec. 1; May issue - Feb. 1; July issue - Apr 1; Sept. issue - June 1; Nov. issue - Aug. 1.

COMING EVENTS: Send to Editor.

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ADVERTISING MANAGER: Advertising rates and information: Cindi Nofziger, 1500 NE Mayview, Albany, OR 97321. *E-mail* <ccnofziger@comcast.net> **(Ad rates on web site: AVSA.org).**

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TALLY TIME: Heather Menzel, 135 N. Main St., Yardley, PA 19057. *E-mail* <hmenzel@erols.com>.

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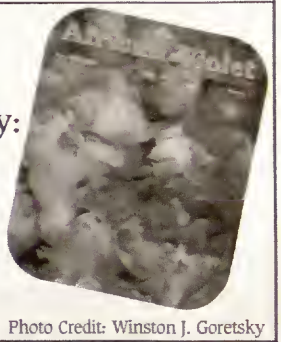
Paul Sorano
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouse
Standard



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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By Ron Davidson, President

941 F. M. 2377 • Red Oak, TX 75154
Email: chiefrond@aol.com

As your new President of AVSA, I want to thank everyone for their support. I look forward to working with the newly-elected officers and Directors. For the first time in AVSA history, a Canadian International Member, Winston Goretsky, has been elected to office as the Third Vice-President. We are truly an international society.

My goals for AVSA are to serve the members and to provide them with the best plant publication available. AVSA can only be as good as the members that support it. AVSA need your support now to continue being the best plant organization in this troubled economy.

Your newly elected Officers and Directors include:

Linda Golubski . . . . . 1st Vice President
John Carter. . . . . 2nd Vice President
Winston Goretsky . . . . . 3rd Vice President
Edna Rourke. . . . . Treasurer
Sue Ramser . . . . . Secretary
Barbara Elkin. . . . . Director, California
Richard Follett . . . . . Director, Virginia
Terry Klemesrud . . . . . Director, Minnesota
Beverly Powers . . . . . Director, Texas
Pat Sutton. . . . . Director, Oklahoma

If you are looking for programs for your local clubs, the Library Committee has produced two more outstanding DVD's that were introduced at the Reno convention.

One is an update of an older 35mm program by Bev Promersberger, detailing her methods of growing award winning trailers *"African Violet Trailers; Making Them Do What I Want Them to Do"*.

The second one is a four-part series on a two DVD set: *"Understanding the African Violet Species"*. This program includes history of our favorite plant, from the discovery of the *Saintpaulia* to the new species classification, with photographs and information on growing these plants for show. This program was researched and written by Dr. Barbara Pershing and Dr. Jeff Smith. Be sure to contact the AVSA office to purchase these fine DVD's. Both make outstanding programs for your local club, and to enjoy at home.

I want to thank the retiring AVSA Committee Chairs and Directors for their outstanding service to AVSA.

Barbara Pershing . . . . . Publications Committee
Linda Owens . . . . . Convention Director
Barbara Trotsky . . Membership & Promotion Committee
Randy Deutsch . . . . . Finance Committee
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Marge Savage . . . . . Director, Texas

A special thanks to our out-going President, Joyce Stork, for her contributions as President, and for her service to AVSA. I know she will continue to serve AVSA as the Past-President and in the future.

Another very special person, Nancy Hayes, who has served AVSA in a number of positions for over forty years is stepping down as Secretary. We will miss her guidance and expertise. But she will not be going away, for I have convinced her to take on a very important role. She will be chairing the committee to look over possible changes in the convention, and updating the convention manual. If you have any recommendations or changes that you feel should be discussed, submit them to me or Nancy.

AVSA is very lucky to have as incoming chair for the Membership and Promotion Committee, a positive thinker with a number of great ideas to promote our society - Kathy Bell, of Tucson, AZ. I would like to challenge every member to assist Kathy with ideas and suggestions to promote AVSA, and to increase membership in their local affiliates. This is something that is very important to the future of AVSA – so every member should assist Kathy in this area.

My wife, Janice, and I hope to attend a number of the regional and state conventions during my time as President. We have always enjoyed visiting with the members and seeing the spectacular shows. So, please let us know when your convention will be held and we will try to arrange our schedule to attend.

If I can be of any assistance, to any AVSA member, feel free to contact me. My name, address, and e-mail are on page 2 of the *African Violet Magazine*. I am also also providing my home phone number: (972) 617-1186.

I want to thank all members for their continued support of the African Violet Society of America.

Ron Davidson
President, AVSA

Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

Our AVSA Archivist and former President, **Janet Riemer**, recently spent a few days at the AVSA Office. We always enjoy Janet's visits (especially taking her out for a Cajun dinner), even though most of her time is spent working on the archives. But, she was also available to answer questions from our members about the Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund, which she chairs.

Spring in definitely here! All around Beaumont the azaleas are in full bloom, vegetable gardens have been planted, and on the light stands in the AVSA office, our African violets are full of color!

Thanks to all of those who submitted articles and photos for this issue. Our own "African Violet Sleuth," **Rich Follett**, pays a visit to England and joined my friend, **Frank Reynolds**, for a tour of the Kew Gardens. Rich's account of the tour is on page 12, "African Violets 'In the Wild' in England."

Mary Schaeffer shares her experiences with wick-watering on page 38. If you don't use this method for watering, you'll want to read Mary's article before you give it a try - "A Year of Wicking Dangerously."

Candy Templeton tells us "Why I Love the New Species Classifications" on page 39. After you read this, you may agree!

Please consider writing an article for the AVM, and please send your color photos of show plants. Photos with uncluttered backgrounds, at a high resolution - 300 dpi, or file sizes of at least 1 MB, or more, produce the high quality needed for printing.

We had some sad news recently. **Alice Easter**, of Philadelphia, passed away in January. Alice was a staunch supporter of our society, a judge, and fixture at the AVSA conventions. She was always ready to lend a hand, and was a very kind, gracious lady. Janet Riemer, a very close friend of Alice's, wrote "Remembering Alice Easter, Always a Lady," on page 45.

My friend in Japan, **Susumu Shizukawa**, sent the following about the death of their long-time, beloved club President, **Mrs. Toshiko Kawakami**.

"Our society's former President, Mrs. Toshiko Kawakami, passed away recently. She wrote nearly ten books about African violets, and had been a president of our society over twenty years. Through her efforts, our members had a great time at the LA convention in 1985. In addition, she was a very special person in my life. I began growing African violets following the instructions in her book. She was a great president, and without her efforts and knowledge, we would not have been able to grow African violets in our country.

"Mrs. Kawakami was my teacher of African violets, other plants, arts, cooking, and so much more. At times, she was my grandmother, and a friend who shared the same hobby. I was most influenced by her personality. She was very gentle, graceful, kind, and the most honest woman I have ever known. In the past five years, she was not in good health, and she passed away at the age of 95."

Are You Up to the Challenge?

In 2006, our AVSA Office Manager, Jenny Daugereau, and I challenged the members of AVSA to purchase a membership for someone new, or to help renew someone's dues.

We each purchased two new memberships, and we were surprised and delighted by the response to our challenge - well over 100 new AVSA Memberships!

Not only did individuals meet our challenge, but many affiliated clubs did, as well. A membership was given as a door prize at several spring and fall shows, holiday club meetings, and monthly meetings. We were overwhelmed by the response!

So, here we go again! Help us grow AVSA membership and step up to the Challenge!

Please put "Challenge" on your envelope or check for tracking.

Ruth

Preparing to Enter the Show

By Annette Kennedy

When I was asked to write this article, I laughed to myself, as this is a case of, "do as I say, not as I do," mainly due to time constraints. But, maybe doing this will help me to be more diligent with my show plants.

The first time I entered a show plant, I had taken a flowering plant, hoping for comments on how to improve my growing. I was advised to take my plant home and remove all the flowers and buds until eight weeks before the show. Being a novice grower, I was quite hesitant to do this, but after a week I slowly removed all the flower stems. The plant still looked all right, just didn't have any flowers.

I thought that if I was going to enter the show I would try and win something. I read the show schedule and found that if I entered five plants I would win a spoon. I was sure that I could do that. I chose four more plants and disbudded them, too. I decided if I won anything else it would be a nice bonus, so I entered a few more as well, and was surprisingly rewarded with some placings.

CLEANING FOLIAGE

It is no good taking a dirty, dusty plant to a show. By using a soft bristled brush, you can regularly, and gently, brush any dust and dirt off your plant. Always support the leaf with your hand and brush gently from the inside to outside of the plant. Take the time to look for anything else that may need to be done, such as removing side shoots and buds.

Another way to clean your plant is to gently wash the leaves under the tap using lukewarm water. Try not to get any water in the center of your plant, but if you do, use a piece of tissue paper to blot it off.

Fluorescent light will not burn wet foliage. But, if large drops of water are left on the foliage, the mineral content of the water may leave permanent spots.

The difference between an average show grower and a dedicated show grower lies almost exclusively with the practice of disbudding. An average grower can't bear not to see blooms throughout the year, a dedicated show grower is content to see nothing but foliage all year. The colorful flowers are what set African violets apart from ordinary houseplants. And yet, if the plants are allowed to remain in full bloom all year, the foliage does not develop to the perfection required to win top awards. One way to overcome this is to have some plants flower freely for your own enjoyment, and other plants to grow especially for the show.

DISBUDDING

Using a small, sharp instrument such as pointed tweezers, carefully remove any flower buds as they develop, it may be necessary to let them become larger to safely remove them. It is advisable to let your plant have one flower so you know that it will flower true.

Disbudding encourages plants to have bigger foliage, but not all plants will grow large, some are smaller growers, but with the same care they have an equal chance in the show.

African violets will flower almost all year round, so they try to flower, then we nip off the buds, and they try again, and we nip off the buds, and so on. When we stop disbudding, they produce a lovely head of flowers, and because we have disbudded, they generally produces a larger head of flowers, and allows us to control the timing of flowering.

There are two ways to disbud. 1.) completely remove the bud and all of the stalk, and 2.) partially disbud by removing only the bud, and leaving a short length of stem. Make sure to remove this before entering your plant in the show.

SYMMETRY

Symmetry is important when growing African violets. As they grow, there may be smaller leaves in the outer row that should be removed. Before you remove any leaf, cover it with a piece of paper to see how your plant will look, and if your symmetry is affected. If a gap shows, it may be possible to train another leaf to that position by gently moving it a millimeter or two, and holding it in place with a toothpick inserted beside the leaf - a process that should be repeated gradually over days, or weeks, until you are satisfied.

Sometimes a mark may appear on a leaf through no fault of yours, but before you remove the leaf have a second look. It may be better to leave that leaf on, rather than taking it off and leaving a gap.

Our local club produces a Show Growing Schedule based on Pauline Bartholomew's book *Growing to Show*. The guide starts twelve weeks before the show and covers disbudding, fertilizer, light hours, etc. All this information is helpful, and you can get further information from other growers, as well as other books in the library.

I encourage all novice growers to enter plants in the local shows.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

Question Box

By Ralph Robinson

P.O. Box 9 • Naples, NY 14512
Email: robsviolet@aolcom

Much has changed since I wrote the last column. Money has become tight, jobs and futures, less secure. Being "small" business owners, we get asked almost every day "how is business?". Certainly not as good, of course, but we'll do just fine. No one decides to sell plants as a living expecting to become wealthy. Farmers, whether the crop is grown outdoors in fields, or indoors, in a greenhouse or under lights, even in the best of times, are always one unforeseen step away from disaster. The whims of "mother nature" (drought, floods, freezes, etc.), technology (losing electricity), or the marketplace (energy prices, finding "good" help), can change good times into bad almost overnight.

The good news? People will always need to eat. And what about violets or the other plants we sell? Even in hard times, perhaps especially in hard times, plants are an important part of their lives and, relatively speaking, this hobby certainly is cheap enough. So, we don't worry too much. We do what we love to do, and we'll make a living doing it, albeit a modest one.

As is always the case, we are far too busy to reply to mail (or e-mail), though we do read all of it. Should you want a personal reply, we are more than willing to answer phone calls made during our normal business hours (12-5 pm EST), since we can work and talk at the same time. For those with access to the internet, we can be reached at robsvioletaol.com or via our web-site at www.violetbarn.com. The web-site also contains a wealth of information (and answers to many of your questions).

Question: How long do African violets bloom?

Answer: This all depends on environment, the variety being grown, and your care. Individual blooms can last anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Varieties producing thicker petals and those with green in the bloom tend to last longer. Blooms will last longer under moderate to high humidity with cooler temperatures (say 60-75f degrees). With cooler temperatures, blooms will also tend to be larger and colors more intense. Once blooms fade or become "spent", remove them, since their "decay" would likely shorten the life of adjacent blooms.

As for how long an African violet will have at least some bloom (the length of the blooming "cycle", so to speak), this will also depend greatly upon environment, care, and variety. Given a good environment, and with proper care, most modern hybrids can be kept in almost continual bloom, once they mature. Most importantly, your violet will need good, consistent, light. This is hard to achieve growing in windows, since the amount of natural light the plant receives varies so greatly from season to season and window to window. Under artificial light, which can be controlled, African violets can bloom nearly constantly with proper care. A related question follows.

Question: Is it true that if you don't allow an African violet to bloom for a while by clipping the blooms as soon as they appear, that in a few months the plant will explode with blooms? I have noticed that the leaves are getting thicker. The leaves look very healthy.

Answer: Yes. This is what most of the best exhibitors do when growing plants for show. By "disbudding", the plant is not allowed to bloom and all of its "energy" goes into producing foliage. The result is a very healthy, vigorous, plant. Standards will tend to produce larger leaves. Miniature and semiminiature varieties won't will remain so, but leaves will become more thick and lush, with better color. When finally allowed to bloom, it can now sustain a much greater amount of bloom. Since new bloom is generally produced only from the newest growth (usually the first few rows of leaves), there may not be a significant increase in the number of bloom stalks. There will, however, be a greater number of blooms per stalk, and likely larger flowers, than had the plant not been disbudded earlier.

Question: How do I get Columnea 'Light Prince' to be full? I have a pot from a previous order that actually has some buds, but is long and "spindly".

Answer: 'Light Prince' is a beautiful plant, and can bloom quite heavily, but it tends to be more seasonal in nature than some of the other columnea. We find that it blooms best in spring, when nights are still a bit cool but days are getting longer and brighter. It will bloom other times of year, but never as heavily or as well. As for keeping it "full" looking, you'll need to get in the habit of occasionally trimming or "pinching" the tips or stems. This will encourage the plant to branch and produce new growth. If not done, individual stems won't tend to branch on their own, and will just keep getting longer and longer. Most plants, columnea included, tend to produce bloom from the newest growth, which means that there's no point in trimming the plant back now, when you have buds appearing. As soon as those blooms disappear, though, trim your plant back and let it fill-out with new growth. Next time, you'll have a fuller plant, with more stems, more new growth, and even more blooms!

Question: I ran across your article about trailers,

and using saucers as pots caught my attention. I have a couple of semiminiature trailers which are badly in need of repotting and would love to give the saucers a try. Several saucers are available here locally. Depending upon the size of the saucers, the depth varies from 1" to 1 3/4' deep. Are these deep enough for the violet roots, or do you have soil above the rim of the saucer? Do violets grown in saucers need any special care?

Answer: Depending upon the variety, any of the saucers mentioned could be used, especially since you're growing smaller-leaved (and shallower rooted) varieties. Lest anyone becomes confused, "saucers" are just pots that are much, much shallower than they are wide. Since it's difficult to find actual pots in these dimensions, we've found it easier to use plastic saucers, drilling holes in the bottom for drainage, than using them as pots. Trailers, which tend to grow horizontally, rather than vertically, are especially suited for this type of pot. Varieties with a good trailing habit will readily branch, then grow along the surface of the soil. Using a very wide, shallow, pot gives them more soil surface onto which they can root (or be pinned to, to encourage rooting) and spread, much like a "ground cover". This is the way that we've always preferred to grow our trailers, at least for show. There's no need to mound the soil above the pot rim on the shallowest of saucers, but as the plant becomes larger and spreads, you will need to slightly increase the depth of the pot. I'd say a good rule of thumb might be a depth one-quarter to one-fifth of the diameter.

We also grow a few trailers in our windows, in natural light, potted in 6" pots hung from hooks. Since these pots are a bit too deep for the plants' root system, it would be easy to overwater and damage the shallow roots. We use a very light soil (containing more than 50% perlite) and will often add extra perlite in the bottom of the pot. This makes overwatering less likely. Not all trailers can be easily grown in saucers, only the "true", naturally trailing, varieties. Some varieties, though they may easily branch, never really "trail". Branches tend to be shorter and more vertical, with less distance between leaves along the stems. These usually look best as a small "shrub". Potted into a saucer, they'll just sit in the middle, like a small mound of foliage in a sea of soil. Though they can be very attractive and easily grown, these varieties also don't make good choices for hanging in windows, since they don't readily trail over the sides of the pot-the pot may be hung, but the plant won't.

Question: I'm losing the outer leaves on my violets. They turn brown and soft. I know this might be a watering problem, but I'm using a water "meter", and watering only when it tells me to.

Answer: Given the symptoms, it's likely that you are, indeed, overwatering your plants. Our experience with the inexpensive water meters most people are familiar with (gauge and needle reading "dry" or "moist" with a probe that's inserted into the soil) are not very reliable. To the extent that they give you a reading at all, it's rarely very precise. Not to sound sarcastic, but the best soil probe to use is attached to the end of your hand - your finger! The rule of watering when the surface of the soil is "dry to the touch" can't be improved upon by technology. Ideally, violets (and many other plants) like to be kept moderately moist. If the soil feels damp, there is no need to water. Watering an already wet plant can lead to the symptoms described above.

When the soil surface just becomes dry, there is still enough moisture deeper within the pot for roots to use. Now is the time to water. Waiting too much longer risks wilting the plant, once the soil loses all of its moisture. In the beginning, this means "touching" your plant's soil almost every day. Eventually, you'll learn when to check, and to anticipate your plant's needs.

Question: I have a Sinningia that I bought from you about 6 months ago (maybe longer). It is doing wonderfully, but I do have a question. It is getting a bit long (tall). I raise Kohleria as well, so when they get long, I cut the top of the plant off at a leaf node and stick it back into the moist soil mix. No problems. Can I do this with this sinningias?

Answer: Yes. You can treat it the same way as a Kohleria, or as an African violet with an extremely long "neck", for that matter. Kohlerias are much easier to reroot, however. They'll root easily even in water, continuing to bloom all the time as a "cut flower". Sinningias don't root quite as readily, however. You might want to place the pot with your cutting in a clear, covered, container or in a plastic bag for a few weeks, until it's rooted.

AVSA OFFICE HOURS
Monday - Thursday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

A name reservation costs $1.00 ($5.00 for non-members) for each plant, and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional $1.00 ($5.00 for non-members). Registration of the plant is $5.00 ($25.00 for non-members) unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is $4.00 ($20.00 for non-members).

Linda Nesvacil – Wisconsin Dells, WI

'Rrav's Irish Elf' (10012) 12/03/2008 (L. Nesvacil) Single-semidouble bright pink pansy/variable dark raspberry tips. Medium green, plain, pointed. **Miniature**

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Hortense Pittman – Celina, TX

'Celina Dark Velvet' (10013) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Semidouble red pansy/dark purple fantasy. **Crown variegated** medium green and cream, serrated. **Semiminiature**

'Celina Elegance' (10014) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Semidouble-double bright red pansy. **Crown variegated** medium green and gold. **Semiminiature**

'Celina Red Jewel' (10015) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Semidouble-double red pansy. **Crown variegated** medium green and yellow. **Semiminiature**

'Jolly Baby Doll' (10016) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Semidouble-double bright rosy pink star. Dark green, plain. **Semiminiature**

'Jolly Blue Clouds' (10017) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Single-semidouble white pansy/blue markings. Light green, plain. **Miniature**

'Jolly Daybreak' (10018) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Semidouble creamy white and yellow. Light green, plain. **Miniature**

'Jolly Gold Halo' (10019) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Double yellow and white ruffled. Medium green, plain, wavy. **Semiminiature**

'Jolly Jupiter' (10020) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Single-semidouble coral-peach pansy. Medium green, plain. **Semiminiature**

'Jolly Peach' (10021) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Semidouble peach-pink pansy. Dark green, plain. **Miniature**

'Jolly Playgirl' (10022) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Semidouble light pink pansy. Medium green, plain. **Semiminiature**

'Jolly Sunrise' (10023) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Double creamy white and yellow frilled. Dark green, wavy. **Semiminiature**

'Precious Angel' (10024) 12/06/2008 (H. Pittman) Double light pink ruffled. **Variegated** medium green and white, plain. **Miniature**

.....

Fay Wagman – Pittsford, NY

'Fay's Madeline' (10025) 12/22/2008 (F. Wagman) Single-semidouble pink two-tone pansy. Dark green girl foliage. **Semiminiature**

REGISTRATION CHANGES

The following descriptions have been changed at the request of the hybridizers:

Titu (4853) Change from "Single white frilled/red streaks, eye" to "Single red-fuchsia/wide white fringed edge."

Allegro Roulette (9165) Add, "white back" to end of blossom description.

AV International Online Meetings

(http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/AVInternational/)

By Karen Panek

We hold Online Meetings for all of the AVI groups' members each weekend, and once a month a **Guest Speaker** who is an Expert in their particular field is invited to attend and participate.

Members briefly introduce themselves at the meeting, then the guest speaker is available to answer questions and may talk of their particular interest or area of expertise.

Since starting our new format meetings in November 2008, so far we have had the pleasure of three guest speakers ~ our esteemed **Joe Bruns, Thad Scaggs,** and **Paul Susi,** and other knowledgeable guest speakers are booked for the coming year.

The alternate weekend meetings, without a guest speaker, are more informal and of a general nature, where members can ask any questions they have, and discuss their plants, growing conditions, clubs, and compare notes or just catch up with old friends.

A lot of fun is had by all who attend; It is an excellent way to learn new things, to ask that particular question, or to talk to that particular person, and to make some new international friends who all share in the wonderful world of African Violets and Gesneriads.

Do please join us!

For more information please write to ~
Warren Wiener, AVI Chatmaster avichat@earthlink.net or
Karen Panek, AVI Groups owner nzviolet@gmail.com
or visit our mother AVI group, Founded 4 March 2000 ~
http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/AVInternational/

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Lonestar Lady

Hybridized and Exhibited by: ***Richard Nicholas***

Standard

11473 Denham Rd. • Gonzales, LA 70737
Email: ekgprof@eatel.net

Springtime is Restraint Time

It's that time of year again, springtime! What does springtime mean to you? To most people, it means cleaning the house, getting the yard in shape, spending time outside after being indoors all winter, or a new beginning with flowers starting to bloom and birds returning from their winter vacations. However, to many of us African violet growers, springtime means shows, plant sales, plant catalogs, and new varieties offered by the hybridizers. Many of us can't wait to get online and see what new varieties the hybridizers have released this year. Some people see it as a sickness, but I prefer to consider it a devotion. As you scour the catalogs, Internet sites, and plant sales rooms, you have to keep asking yourself one question..."Do I have any restraint?"

It is very difficult to look at new African violet plants and not want everything. I want to try to grow everything. Every blossom type, color, and pattern catches my eye, and I must have it. Every foliage type, color, and pattern attracts my attention, and I want to try and grow it. I even tell myself that I should retry growing plants that I had no luck with in the past. After all, this is a new year, and I am a better grower. It should grow beautifully now, right?

I have to show restraint, as I don't have room for many more plants. My growing room is already overcrowded. I also have to keep reminding myself that African violets like air circulation for optimal growth. This requires space between the plants so the air can circulate. Overcrowding plants cuts down on the air circulation between the plants. Overcrowding also allows insects and pests to spread more easily between plants as the African violets are closer together or even touching each other. Therefore, overcrowding must be avoided which is much easier said than done.

Restraint must especially be shown among new growers. As you enter into this hobby and you haven't yet experienced many of the growing habits and idiosyncrasies of the various African violet hybrids, it is far too easy to want to grow everything you can get your hands on: every plantlet a club member wants to get rid of, every sucker a plant produces, every leaf you groom from your plants, or every seed given to you (and this is before the hybrids you see at plant sales, commercial grower's catalogs, or on the internet). This is a new hobby, and if you are a typical grower, you want to get into it completely, but you must show constraint.

I have seen too many new growers enter the hobby and try to grow everything. They do not want to throw anything away. I have seen many beginning growers show enthusiasm when they enter the hobby and within a few months they get discouraged and quit: not because they can't grow African violets but because they did not show restraint. Because their collection grew so rapidly, they were constantly working on the plants rather than enjoying the plants. The hobby was no longer fun; it became a chore.

I have seen many beginning growers show enthusiasm when they enter the hobby, and within a few months they get discouraged and quit: not because they can't grow African violets but because they did not show restraint.

I have seen many new growers purchase dozens of African violet leaves, and when the plantlets begin growing, they pot every one; they can't muster the courage to throw a plantlet away. A general rule of thumb is that... for every leaf put down for propagation, you can expect five to ten plants to develop. Remember, a small tray of leaves can quickly become 500 plants that require repotting, watering, grooming, and general caring.

To maintain your collection at a reasonable size and keep a fun hobby from turning into a chore, keep only the strongest of the newly developed plantlets. I generally keep only one or two plantlets propagated from a leaf. The rest of the growth finds their way into my scrap pile. When removing plantlets, I carefully separate the plantlets from the mother leaf, trying to maintain as much root as possible; the plantlets with the most roots are the plants I keep.

Restraint must also be exhibited when purchasing new plants from the AVSA commercial growers. Although they

provide us with new introductions and many of the older varieties that we wish we grew again, it is very easy to peruse through their catalogs or their Internet sites and see African violets, which we have to grow. The description of each new African violet is better than the previous, using words like great bloomer, always in bloom, great show plant. We just have to have them all. I am not chastising the hybridizers; if it weren't for them, we would not have the great African hybrids with the many strong inbred qualities that we have it weren't for them. I am just stating that beginner growers have to go slow at first not to get burned out quickly.

In closing, I would like to remind beginning growers as well as experienced growers that restraint is needed when choosing plants to grow and propagate. Growing African violets is a fun, rewarding hobby, but it can get out of hand quickly if the enthusiast is not careful. Don't let your hobby get out of hand, and DON'T LET IT BECOME A CHORE.

Canadian Growers Share their Secrets: Doris and John Brownlie

By Beverley Williams, Brooklin, Ontario

Originally presented at the AVSA Convention, June 2006, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Also presented at the AVSC Convention, October 2007, Mississauga, Ontario.

John and Doris welcome people to their two-storey condominium townhouse at any time by appointment. There, they grow about 500 varieties of standards, 150 miniature and semiminiature African violet hybrids, together with other Gesneriads, that you will find in their basement. John is the hybridizer of the Aca's varieties. John and Doris will talk about violets with anyone, at any time, anywhere.

Between them they are members of the Lakeshore African Violet Society, Toronto African Violet Society, AVSA, AVSC, New York State African Violet Society, Ohio State African Violet Society, AVSA Judge's Council - Ontario, and the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society, the Toronto Gesneriad Society, the Gesneriaddicts of Western New York, the Gesneriad Society, and the Saintpaulia & Houseplant and Streptocarpus Societies of England. Doris is an AVSA Master Judge and a Gesneriad Master Judge.

John and Doris were the recipients of the AVSA Bronze Medallion, and Doris was the recipient of the Hudson Memorial Award in the year 2000, at the Omaha AVSA Convention.

They started growing African violets in 1972, after receiving a housewarming present of 'Rhapsodie Marie.' In 1975, they joined the local, national, and international societies. They started showing plants at the Lakeshore AVS in 1976, where they won Second Best in Show with 'Ballet Lisa.'

Every summer, John and Doris hand-mix the Ernest Fisher formula for soil. Doris says, "We mix it in our driveway and keep it in garbage bins. Our bins are stored wherever we have a spare corner. Visitors must make an appointment to avoid having to deal with the laundry, which I hang up for extra humidity and saving on hydro."

Their motto is, "We grow to please you." They concentrate on proven show winners, but are always looking for something new and different. When Doris is growing seriously for show, she chooses the plants just after Christmas, gives them room to grow, and disbuds them. At other times, seven to eight weeks before the show, she chooses the best-looking plants for the various classes and disbuds them at this time. Taking the room to grow show plants means that John does not have room for his 200 seedlings. This is often a subject of discussion and the reason why her show plants are not big.

For serious show plants, a 5-inch azalea pot is used; for the others, a 4-inch or 4 1/2 inch azalea pot. In the past, John and Doris have grown as many as fifty show plants for their display table, but now take no more than thirty to a show and devote the space in the van to plants for sale. Their show plants are about one year old. Many plants are kept from one year to the next, re-potting about twice a year, usually after removing five leaves to sell at shows in the spring and fall.

They have thirty-eight sets of 4-foot, two-lamp fluorescent lights in shelves and three-tier stands. They use cool white and Gro-lux, and cool white and warm white lights in combination. Plants get twelve hours of light, thirteen or fourteen if the plants are not blooming soon enough for show, ten or eleven if they are blooming too soon.

When asked how they water, Doris replied, "We water every four days with a fountain pump attached to a long hose. We fill a large garbage pail with warm, fertilized water from the tap. When finished, we run hot water with Physan into the line and leave it there to stop algae forming in the line."

They use Peters 12-36-14 for the violets and Peters 20-20-20 for the other gesneriads, adding one drop of Superthrive to each gallon of water. They do not alternate or change. When grooming show plants, Doris stands at the freezer and raises them up on upturned pots to elbow level. Then she uses a brush, long handled tweezers, sharp scissors, and a nut pick.

Spraying with Phyton 27, and keeping several fans and an air exchanger running helps combat mildew. "Choosing good varieties, consistent care, patience, and timing are the secrets to an award-winning plant," says Doris.

From *Chatter*, publication of the AVS of Canada

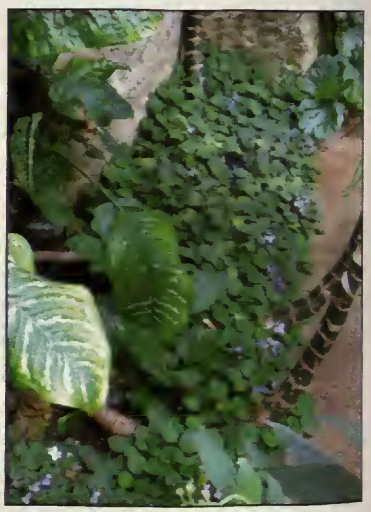
African Violets 'In the Wild' in England

By Richard Follett

5b.cl.difficilis at Kew Gardens

Because my African violet addiction is incurable and recognizes no boundaries, I have made it my habit to seek out AV plants and enthusiasts whenever and wherever I travel. As a result, I have made some delightful discoveries in altogether unexpected places. One such 'moment of discovery' took place in England in November of 2008. Species violets have long held a particular fascination for me – so much so that I am planning a safari to Tanzania to see them in bloom in their native habitat, in celebration my fiftieth birthday in 2010. As I have conducted research for that trip, I have read a great deal about species violets in collections all around the world. One collection that jumps out over and over again from the available literature as being extraordinary is held at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew, England. From the moment I read that Kew Gardens displays species violets in an environment scientifically designed to mimic their native habitat, I was in deep trouble. I just *had* to see for myself!

Frank Reynolds



Bank of 5b.cl. confusa

Well, one thing we teachers are famous for is our ability to multi-task, and I was soon able to devise a means of combining my personal and professional interests in a unique way. In November of 2008, after a year-and-a-half of diligent fund-raising, I led a week-long Shakespeare tour to London and the surrounding area for thirty-two of my students and nineteen adult chaperones. It was a wonderful and unforgettable adventure. During the course of the week, we had one 'free day' to spend as we wished. At dinner the night before our 'free day,' all of the students, parents, and teachers were chattering excitedly about shopping, sightseeing, visiting museums, etc. so I am sure they all thought I had bid my wits *adieu* when I confessed that I was going to spend my one 'free day' searching for African violets.

What they didn't know is that I had e-mailed fellow AVSA member and friend Frank Reynolds who lives in England and arranged for him to meet me at Kew Gardens for an African violet 'safari' through the greenhouses. I had a secret 'partner in crime!' We made our rendezvous at about 9:00 on a typically gray and blustery English morning at the wrought iron gates by Kew Gardens' West Entrance and set off on our quest. Our first stop was the famous Victorian Palm House; this is by far the most famous feature of Kew Gardens' 300-plus acres. The Palm House features a venerable, lacey latticework of white wrought iron and vintage glass panes that gives one a sense of being on horticultural hallowed ground. We spent more than two hours meandering the pathways both on the ground and high up in the treetops and saw countless wonders, but not even *one* African violet! When I asked the greenhouse attendant, she scratched her head and said she didn't know of any African violets growing anywhere on the premises. I thought to myself "this can't be – scientists have been

Princess of Wales Conservatory

depositing and growing specimens here for more than fifty years!" Frank looked just as mystified as I was. Our next stop was the Temperate House, which was modern and airy and full of – *cacti and succulents.* Acres of them, it seemed. Undeniably beautiful and exotic, but... There, too, the attendant blinked vacantly when we said we were looking for African violets. I was steadily inching my way toward complete despair.

It has oft been said that God works in mysterious ways, and my prayers were answered at the most unexpected moment. Frank and I had no sooner resigned ourselves to our apparent failure when I turned to him as we were contemplating yet another 500-year-old tree and said "these trees are magnificent but I would trade them all for one *Saintpaulia ionantha.*" That's when it hit me – *Saintpaulia*! We were in one of the world's leading botanical gardens, and I had spent the entire morning asking the staff members where I could see the collection of *African violets*! I took off like a shot – poor Frank must have thought I was either sick to my stomach or possessed – and re-entered the cactus display to ask the attendant about any saintpaulias he might have seen in his travels. He gave me a 'why didn't you say so?' look and said "they're just over there in the Princess of Wales." I shrieked with joy and, triumphant, bounded out to tell Frank the news. I am delighted to report that his British resolve crumbled just long enough for him to break into a schoolboy grin and exclaim "right, that's excellent!" We set off together at a brisk walk

Rich and the 'wild' violets in England

S.rupicola at Kew Gardens

(being that we were in Britain, running was out of the question) and arrived in short order at the breathtaking Princess of Wales Conservatory – home to one of the world's most bountiful displays of *Saintpaulia* in a replica of their native habitat.

I am sure Frank was mortally embarrassed as I danced around the pathways of the greenhouse whooping at each new variety as I crossed it off my list – *S. ionantha* (blue *and* white!); *S. difficilis*; *S. mangungensis* (both regular and '*minima*'); *S. velutina*; *S. teitensis*; *S. tongwensis; S. confusa* – the list goes on and on. I must have looked and sounded, to him, like a hyperactive adolescent Labrador retriever in a tweed coat. By contrast, Frank was the epitome of British decorum, placidly examining each specimen with an occasional slant of the head or arch of an eyebrow. He didn't fool me for a minute, though; I could tell he was thrilled. The tell-tale, elfin grin on his face as he turned each new corner was a dead giveaway!

The Princess of Wales Conservatory is harmoniously designed to fit into the existing landscape. Low to the ground and full of nooks and crannies, it follows the contours of the earth so closely that visitors truly feel as if they are in a native environment. The *Saintpaulia* displays were everywhere: entire banks of *S. confusa* edged pathways throughout the simulated rain forest; here and there, intrepid *S. ionantha* plants peeked out from the mossy rock ledges upon which they grew, and *S. rupicola* cascaded out of rotting logs amidst breathtaking specimen plants of each species and subspecies in full bloom and perfectly positioned for maximum visibility and enjoyment. Of course, all of the plants were labeled with the brand new designations resulting from the recent reclassification of *Saintpaulia* species (see the chart below for correct, updated classifications), so the experience was as educational as it was intoxicating. The Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew are a species violet lover's Paradise! I still hope to travel to Tanzania, but I am certain that this was the next best thing. In the end, it was

worth all of the year-and-a-half of fundraising and hours of frustrating hunt-and-peck around most of Kew Gardens' 300 acres to spend that priceless hour with my friend Frank, lost among the violets.

Oh, and I saw some really cool Shakespeare stuff on the other days...

"Old" Name:	Correct Name After Reclassification:
S. ionantha	5c1. cl. *Ionantha*
S. difficilis	5b. cl. *difficilis*
S. magungensis	5b. cl. *magungensis*
S. magungensis var. *minima*	5b. cl. *magungensis* var. *minima*
S. velutina	5h. cl. *velutina*
S. teitensis	stays as is
S. tongwensis	5c1. cl. *tongwensis*
S. confusa	5b. cl. *confusa*
S. rupicola	stays as is (at least under the AVSA system)

(Thank you to Dr. Jeff Smith for providing updated species classifications, correctly formatted)

AVSA DONATION FUND LEVELS

Thumbprint (Under $25)

Geneva ($100-$499)

Two-tone ($25-$49)

Fantasy ($500-$999)

Multicolor ($50-$99)

Chimera (Over $1000)

Introducing a New AVSA Director to Serve Through the 2010 Annual Meeting

Doris Brownlie has been growing African violets and other gesneriads in her home in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, with her husband, John, since 1975. They have been in the business of selling show quality plants and supplies since 1978. They have both been Life Members of AVSA since 1976. In 1976 Mr. Fisher, who was Canada's leading hybridizer at the time, introduced them to the Lakeshore African Violet Society of Toronto where they learned the basics of growing and shared the experience of competing in the local shows. Now they belong to ten different African violet societies, and compete in shows all over North America. They attend conventions, always looking for new and different hybrids.

They call their business Aca's Violet - Tree. A is for Australia, the land in which Doris was born, the other A is for America, the land of John's birth, and C is for Canada, the country in which they have chosen to live.

Doris is a master judge of African violets and gesneriads and is a member on the board of eight different societies in North America. She was a director on the Board of AVSA in 1996 - 97, and has been a member of the Membership and show award committees ever since. In 2000 she received the Hudson Memorial award for her involvement with the local societies.

Before she retired in 1993, she was a teacher, first in Australia, then in England, and finally in Canada. She has also lived in Switzerland as the downstairs maid in the home of a Swiss banker. She is a Canadian citizen but likes to be thought of as a citizen of the world.

AVSA Affiliates

By Lynne Wilson, Affiliate Committee

645 Hudson Avenue • Tampa, FL 33606
Email: wilsonav@tampabay.rr.com

Meetings "Fun & Function"

Have you ever considered how your affiliate meetings appear to a first time visitor? Do the words chaotic, mysterious, mumbo-jumbo, etc. describe how your meetings might be to the uninitiated? It might be that our basic (to us) terminology would escape understanding by the new African violet grower.

One suggestion would be to assign a more experienced member to your visitors and newer members. These mentors could answer any questions the guest or newer member might have as well as introduce the visitor to the general membership.

Another idea is to include a page or two of some of the more basic terminology in your yearbooks or to give out as "handouts" before your meetings begin.

A good rule of thumb is the have a meeting agenda. Some of the first items on the agenda would be:

1) Call the meeting to order.
2) Welcome both guests and new members
3) Pledge of Allegiance and
4) Inspirational Reading.
5) Secretary's report and the approval of the last meeting's minutes, including any additions and/or corrections. This informs both members and guests of what this affiliate has just accomplished and has under consideration.
6) Treasurer's report.
7) Reports follow: Reporting by other club officers and affiliate representatives (National, Regional, and State). These representatives inform members as to dates and locations of meetings & shows held by these groups.
8) Unfinished Business includes upcoming events your affiliate is undertaking where plans still need to be completed.
9) New Business involves future projects to be considered and voted upon.
10) Announcements: News of members & members families, next meeting topic, hosts, reminders, Birthdays, etc.
11) Show & Tell: Members might bring in a plant they have questions about, or one that is unusual or doing really well and they want to share its history.
12) Roll Call
13) Mini-Lesson or Tip of the Day
14) Program
15) Refreshments & Raffle
16) Adjournment after thanking the program presenter and those members bringing refreshments and raffle.

This is a basic meeting outline. Some clubs offer plant clinics at each meeting, while others have a club project plant that they bring to the meetings and compare with each other. Leaf exchanges, soil mixing parties, pre-show and sale parties (members label and bag supplies to be sold) anniversary and Christmas parties are all fun and functional meeting ideas. The program chairman has a very important responsibility and would appreciate any offers of assistance. Some meetings have a program that involves the total group membership suggesting a topic and then members have a draw for the topic they would present. It is just like drawing a name out of a hat or a 3 x 5 card out of a bag with the topics already written. The member draws that card and then is responsible for doing the research and presenting that program. Since the topics are suggested by the membership in your affiliate, then your meeting should be well attended.

I mentioned an inspirational reading, refreshments, raffle plants, tip of the day. It is best to divide these responsibilities among your membership so everyone gets a chance and no one feels overwhelmed. Both refreshments and raffle could be more than one member supplying the food and drink for refreshments and plants (or pots, fertilizer, etc.) for the raffle.

Everyone seems to enjoy a plant raffle. My club has one every meeting. The violet gods must enjoy these too because it seems that the guests and new members seem to hold the winning tickets. Any handout received by the newbie's seems to be welcomed. A little encouragement and lots of TLC needs to be given our new members.

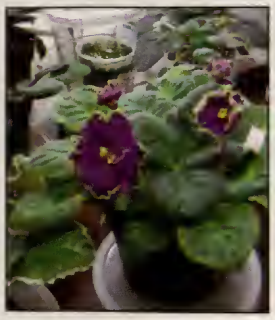
A reminder phone call or email sent to inform the current membership and guests that were present at the last meeting of your next meeting will result in more members attending and those who were guests might just join in the fun and become members. Clubs that desire increasing their membership should have a guest book or sign up list. Those who desire continued contact for shows, sales, displays, and workshops can be added to your list. This list is an important method of communicating and keeping it current is a must.

I hope these ideas will help all our affiliates increase their membership and I encourage you to share your ideas with the Affiliate Committee.

Catherine's African Violets

By Mary S. Schaeffer

Catherine Ross, an avid African violet grower and member of AVSA passed away suddenly last fall. I did not know her, but am lucky enough to have some of her plants. They are now blooming profusely in my family room and it's early March. The story of how I ended up with some of her violets demonstrates just how thoughtful and quick thinking AVSA members can be. I'd like to tell you the story of how this came to be.



Lovely Lace

The Original Posting

On September 30 there was a posting in one of the African violet discussion groups (AV Swap Buddies) that I belong to. It was titled, *In Memory of Catherine*. I've edited it down for brevity. Here's part of what it said:

"Recently we lost group member Catherine Ross. She was only with us three months when God took her home without notice. Catherine was one of six members in her local AVSA club. Another member of Catherine's AV club was our Dorothy Anderson. Dorothy and two other club members have retrieved over 25 large trays of plants in all stages of growth in hopes of selling some at their three-hour club sale on October 25 and keeping some. However, they all have space and time limitations as well.

"Group member/moderator Fay Hartwick and I (Karen Harris) are going to sort through a lot of these leftover/excess trays of plants, rooted leaves, leaf pots, plantlets, offering them to the AV Swap Buddies for a set amount of money. Shipping will take place by mid October, bare root shipping with no pots. I believe we will easily have 250 different "somethings" to share. Each box will be packed with an assortment - our pick. Fay is donating her gas money and time, as I am. We think it will take two full days to pack for shipping - a mass mailing and assembly line. All collected money will be given to Catherine and Dorothy's local AVSA group. They may donate to the national AVSA in memoriam to Catherine. Please consider helping out."

The Response

Consider this. A group of African violet lovers are given the chance to 'help out' and get African violets at the same time. Seventeen members took twenty-five boxes of plants. Now, if you've ever packed a box of plants for shipping, you know how much work is involved in getting just one box ready so the plants arrive in good shape. And, it seems the original estimate of 250 plants was on the low side!

Add to the normal work load, the fact that each of the plants was shipped bare rooted to save shipping costs – and there were twenty-five boxes, each with 12-24 plants in them. Don't forget, this didn't happen overnight. The collection not only had to be retrieved, but watered until it was worked out who was participating and who would get what. On October 9, Fay wrote, "I just want to let you know we picked up Catherine's violets yesterday from Dorothy. The bed of the truck (eight feet) was full, as well as three trays in the back seat. Karen came over last night, and we sorted violets for over four hours!" What Fay didn't say was the round trip was over 100 miles.

The Backbreaking Part: Preparing to Ship

Karen noted that a good 90% were in great shape, the other 10% just crowded and needed more room to have grown more robust. Everyone would get a plant or two that needs especially tender loving care. Let me comment on that. I got several 'plants' that I eventually divided up – and all were in great shape. I wish the rest of my collection was this sturdy.

Now, here's the kicker. As you might imagine, as they bare-rooted and wrapped the plants, they sometimes removed leaves. These fine ladies took the time to label and mail along leaves. We were warned to get ready for the arrival, and that many of the plants were miniatures and semi miniatures. This was perfect for me.

Rob's Boo Hoo

Here's Karen's description of Fay's packing process. "She removed each plant from its pot, removed most of the soil, removed all the leaves that needed to be removed, removed some leaves if it helped in packing the plant, rolled the roots in Glad Press n' Seal (that right there will make your hair turn white), and labeled bags for the leaves if there were any to spare. Then she rolled the plant in paper, placed it in a box she had to assemble and add packing peanuts or insulation to, and set it aside with the leaves from those plants so as to NOT purposely put leaves of the same plants back in the box. Then she divided the extra leaves among the other boxes ready to go, times eight."

Near as I can tell, they spent almost a week just packing.

The Fun Part: The Boxes Arrive

It was Christmas in October for those who got boxes – and that's how many described it. Another woman said "Yesterday was like Christmas and my birthday rolled into one." We each got a box full of violet surprises – and miraculously, there were few duplicates. As each person got their box, they posted what they received on the discussion group. I think I was one of the last to receive her box, or maybe I was just impatient. But, the wait was well worth it. My box was packed to the gills with all sorts of surprises – and nary a broken leaf. The Press n' Seal approach is really a great way to ship – but I cannot imagine the amount of time and work it took.

I've read about people who take old venetian blinds, cut them down, and use them for labels. Apparently Catherine did that. And, her handwriting was meticulous. I ended up with 24 plants and 20 leaves. I was exhausted after unpacking and repotting my double box – so I can only imagine how tired Karen and Fay must have been. Some of those plants have been divided, as they must have been leaf pots that I was not astute enough to notice at the time.

There's More

As the boxes arrived, we all noted that they came, in the discussion group. That's what led me to believe I was at the end. From time to time, we talk about Catherine's plants. So her memory lives on even with those of us who were never privileged to know her when she was alive. Also, when all was said and done, after the postage costs, there were funds left over for a charitable donation. You see, the hardworking ladies took nothing for their time or materials.

Her legacy is perpetuated in another way. Fay set up an album on the Internet in memory of Catherine and invited us to post pictures when our plants bloomed. She started the project by posting several pictures of some of the trays of plants before they were prepared for mailing. I'd like to point out that these are only some of the trays, not all that were packed. Also, keep in mind that these plants are just starting to bloom and are not show ready – YET! See them at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AVSwapBuddies/photos/album/1910558449/pic/list.

CREATING A NATURAL GARDEN

By Mary Lou Harden

A Natural Garden is a planting in a container formed from natural material, such as weathered wood, lava rock, shell, or maybe even a sponge. It may have more than one planting area or pocket. The AVSA Scale of Points for Container Gardens is:

Landscape Plan . . . . . 40 points
Suitability of Materials . . . . . 20 points
Condition of Materials . . . . . 20 points
Cultural Perfection . . . . . 10 points
Relation to Container . . . . . 10 points

1. Read the Schedule

a. Does it require a theme?

b. Any size limitations?

2. View

Is the exhibit to be viewed from the front side only - or several or all sides?

3. Choose your Container

a. Driftwood? Shell? Make sure it fits the size requirements in all directions.

b. As long as it is not apparent, you may join two pieces of similar wood, gluing them together. Sometimes it is necessary to add a piece of similar material to stabilize the container. It must be sturdy, and able to be easily moved.

4. Construction

a. If using weathered wood, brush the wood on all sides, maybe even use an air hose on it to get rid of any loose sand or hiding bugs, or you can soak the wood overnight.

b. Turn the wood different ways to find the best view. A big consideration is "pockets" in which to place your plants. You may have to "create" some pockets. To do this, select lightweight, thin pieces of tree bark or pieces of palm trees. Break them or cut them into shapes that "fit" into the line of your wood, then glue them in place.

5. Planting

a. The overall size of your container will determine the height of your plant material.

You must take into consideration not only the width and height of your container, but also whether it has a heavy or light appearance. Scale is important.

b. Select well groomed, clean, fresh plants of different size, texture, and color. As a general rule, you should use 5 different kinds of plants, not including the violets.

c. Remove the plants from their pots, break off some of the soil around the roots, then wrap the root ball in very wet sphagnum moss. Be generous with the amount of sphagnum moss you use - otherwise, the plants will dry out and become wilted. You can then wrap the root ball with a rubber band or wire to hold it all together.

d. Your design must have visual, if not actual, balance.

e. Place your violets last, so they will be the focal point of the arrangement.

f. Finish the design by adding fresh green moss in strategic places.

g. Spray-mist the arrangement often during the show, but keep heavy mist off the violet blossoms.

From *The Dixie News*, publication of the Dixie AVS

Vintage Violets

By Barbara Elkin, *Vintage Violets Committee*

2855 Gayle Lane • Auburn, CA 95602-9674
Email: bjbar121@yahoo.com

Vintage and Most Wanted Violets: NEW, EASIER WAY TO FIND THOSE SPECIAL CULTIVARS!!!

Vintage Violets has become SO popular and successful that we're going to change the way it operates just a little to better meet the needs of AVSA members.

What's the same: In each issue of the ***AVM***, I'll include a list of wanted cultivars. If you have a cultivar on the list and are willing to share a leaf or plantlet, contact me (contact info below). If you have a cultivar you're seeking, again contact me. I'll try to put you in contact with someone who has the cultivar. Everyone's privacy is respected, and the exchange is worked out between the two individuals. Your street address would help me as some of the people looking for a plant are not on line. This list will include Vintage as well as Rare Gems, long to be out of circulation.

What's improved: The *entire* "Most Wanted" list will appear in the ***AVM*** November/December issue every year. After that, it will be updated regularly and available online (see below) or from the AVSA office (see below).

Each issue of the ***AVM*** will contain this column, along with additional cultivars being sought, as shown below.

AVSA affiliates, including those online, are being encouraged to print (or post online on their web page) the "Most Wanted" list and make it available to as many growers as possible, especially to those without Internet access. Permission to print or post the "Most Wanted" list from the AVSA web site is hereby given.

There are some "Most Wanted" gems hiding in long-time collections, and I feel that once these growers know they have something being sought, they'll be willing to share to help keep these treasures in circulation.

Thank you for helping me! If you have any questions, please contact me. Barbara Elkin (bjbar121@yahoo.com or 2855 Gayle Lane, Auburn, CA 95602).

For a full listing of all "Vintage and Rare Gems" African violets, please go to our web site, <www.avsa.org>, click on AVSA Library, and then click on Vintage Violets – AVSA's Most Wanted. If you do not have computer access, please ask a club member who does to print the list out for you, or contact the ***AVM*** Editor for a copy.

AVSA Most Wanted:

Abe Lincoln
Aca's Eloise
Aca's Vivien Leigh
Acrobat
Ami Alba
Ami Felicien
Antonette
August Moon
August Skies
Baby Bell
Baby Helen
Bandit
Bianca
Blue Aura
Bobby's Michelle
Bryan (Volkmann)
Buttercup
Cat's Meow
Colonel Ron
Conrad
Conrad Crotts
Cristina
Cristy Clark
Cynthia (Fisher)
Cynthia (Tinari)
Dan
Daniel Scott
Dolores (Raskopf)
Donna (Utz)
Donna Lynn (Utz)
Emma Lahr (Montgomery)
Eugenio (Whittlesy)
Florentine
Florence Walker
Fortunada
Francis
Frank
Franklin
Genevieve (Perdue)
Genevieve R
Grace
Green Crystal
Ian Marietta
It's June
Jack Frost
Jana
Jana Gail
Jeff (E. Fuller)
Jeffery
Jeremy (Rienhardt)
Joanne
Joey
Junie
Karl's Illusion
Little Miss
Little Melissa
Little Luvely
Little Sassy
Little Red Hot Lou
Mary's Love (Mahen)
Mister Bill (A. Black)
Mister Peter
Mister Sam
Lively Lana
Mrs. Greg
Mon Ami
Monique (Constantinov)
My Lady Joanne
Peggy (Kreska/Lyon)
Peggy's Daniel (Kreska/Lyon)
Perry Keith
Ralph Larry (Reed)
Rhapsodie Cornelia
Rhapsody Gloria
Rodney
Rosemary (Fisher)
Rose's Eddie Boy
Sandra (Utz)
Suzy's Jerry B. (S. Johnson)
Sarah
Scott Daniel
Ringo
Skagit Petite Charm
Skagit Pixie Trails
Skagit Rainbow Trails
Skagit Small Favorite
Skagit Tony Miss
Skagit Tiny Trails
Skagit Toy Asset
Skagit Wee Lassy
Skagit Wee Minx
Skagit Wee Nymph
Steven, Sweet Mary (Lorenzen)
Tammy
Tara
Travis Love
Veronique (Arndt)
Vicky
Wee Stevie
Wendy

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

Janet Riemer - 256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd. • Pennington, NJ 08534

December 8, 2008 – February 26, 2009

Geneva

Lone Star African Violet Council
(In memory of Mural Fort, Mary Stallings, Anne Tinari, and Ruth Wheeler)
Chuck Bingham

Multicolor

Janet Riemer
(In memory of Alice Easter)
Susan Riley
AVS of Minnesota
(In memory of Conrad Nelson)
First AVS of Wichita Falls (TX)

Two-tone

Carolyn Lantz
(In memory of Jane K. Tomlinson)
Janet Riemer
(In honor of Gerry Brenner's 100th birthday)
F. Eleanor Mattaliano

Thumbprint

West Texas AVS
(In memory of Ted Thomas, father of Lea Greers)
Amethyst AV Club (MO)
(In memory of Ralph Evensen, husband of Marilyn Evensen)
Doris Braendel
Ethel Spurlin
Marion Hamtil
Eileen M. Mors
Frances Ratte
Rebecca McMeel
Tristate AV Council (NJ)
Corky Reichmann
Jill G. Fischer
Catherine L. Walbridge

Total this period - $645.00

My Bride, the Judge Or You Can't Get Best in Class Without a Groom!!

Wayne Tomczyk • The Tucson African Violet Society

I happen to think that the best teacher I have had in my short excursion into growing African violets has been my wife, Anne-Lee. Most of the time, I am sure, she probably takes my lack of patience...or my rolling eyes...or my frustrated look, as signs that I do not welcome, or listen to, her advice. But I do! She has only been growing and showing African violets for a little over three years, but has a whole slew of ribbons and rosettes to show for her efforts.

Last fall, we attended a new judges' class, although I had only just entered my first show and only had two blue ribbons to my name (three are required to become a judge), so I just audited the class. Anne-Lee was surprised (I wasn't) a few weeks later to get the notification that she had passed her exam, and was now a novice judge.

In November, she was asked if she would serve as a judge at the Phoenix Desert Sun African Violet and Gesneriad Society's 2009 show, "It's Showtime," and gladly accepted, knowing she was going to get to work with two extremely experienced and knowledgeable judges, Ruth Loomis and Alan Reith. Anne-Lee was certain that she would learn a great deal about judging, as well as growing, award-winning African violets.

Last week was the show, and according to Anne-Lee, she was NOT disappointed! For a relatively small club, the Phoenix members put on a well-organized show with over 180 entries. Anne-Lee related to me later that both Ruth and Alan spent a lot of time discussing their decisions on the entries, and Anne-Lee learned a great deal from each of them.

On the ride back to Tucson after the show, Anne-Lee and I were discussing the show and I asked her what one thing stood out about the plants that she had judged. She said that when she, Ruth, and Alan made the final determination of the "Best in Class" and "Best in Show" award winners, all three judges had to look at the entire body of blue ribbon winners in each category to determine the best plant. She said that in almost all cases, it was obvious that what separated the winner from the runners-up were simple acts of grooming. A spent blossom or two, a small lower leaf, a damaged leaf, petiole stubs, an obvious space in the conformity of the plant, etc. All three judges noted that minor attention to these items were all that prevented many plants from getting the coveted "Best in" ribbons.

Hearing this lesson from my un-official mentor reminded me, again, that just a little daily attention with your potential show plants can pay great dividends when the show occurs. Now, if I can follow through, maybe I can get that third blue ribbon and become a judge myself!

"And the winners are . . ."

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069
Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

AVC OF GREATER KANSAS CITY, MO – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buffalo Hunt, Taffeta Blue, Rhapsodie Katja; Best Gesneriad: *Petrocosmea rosettifolila,* **Pat Inbody.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Little Pro, Rob's Boogie Woogie, Winnergreen; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Little Pro; Best Standard: Mac's Circus Clown; Best Miniature: Rob's Smarty Pants; Best Trailer: Pink Star Lou; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lynn Canning.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia confusa*, **Tricia Taylor.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Marian Schaaf.**

ROCKY MOUNTAIN AVS, CO – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Watermelon, Rhapsody Cora, Cinnamon Gumdrops; Best Standard: Buckeye Seductress; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Susan Shaw.** Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia orbicularis* var. *purpurea; Saintpaulia nitida, Saintpaulia ionantha* subspecies *velutina*; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subspecies *velutina*, **Fran Ratte.**

Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cutie, Rob's Cloudy Skies, Jolly Orchid; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Trailer: Rocky Mountain Trail; Best Design, **Nelly Levine.** Best Semiminiature: Cupid's Jewel, **Rachel McKitrick.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Magnetosphere', **Trudy Brekel.** Design Sweepstakes, **Colleen Clark.**

UPPER PINELLAS AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Collection: Ma's Debutante, Powwow, Funambule; Best in Show/Best Standard: Ma's Debutante; Best Gesneriad: *Aeschynanthus humilis*, **Mary Helen Maran.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Wrangler's Spanish Cavalier, Lonestar Helen Mahr, Louise Croteau; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Antique Rose, Slow Dancin', Blue Silhouette; Best Miniature: Jolly Star; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Antique Rose; Best Trailer: Rocky Mountain Trail; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* white; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Phyllis King.** Best Design, **Regina Robinson.**

Memorial Day TRIBUTE

New Program Ideas are Not Hard to Find

By Barbara Goodsell

Last year, I ordered the revised edition of *Growing to Show*, by Pauline Bartholomew.

My older copy is used on my educational exhibit at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. In looking through the book, I thought that there were so many things that could be used as a program for our Glenview/North Shore club.

Our first program for January 2009 was "Blossom Show & Tell." Members were asked to bring various types of blossoms.

I photocopied page 11 of the book, "Blossom Types and Shapes," and passed it out to the members. This page always appears on my educational exhibit at the Botanic Gardens.

One of our members took an individual blossom, affixed it to heavy paper, named the variety, and placed it in a plastic bag to pass around.

I brought the whole blossom stem! I don't feel bad about taking beautiful blossoms from a nice plant, as more blooms will replace them.

We compared the blossoms to the page and had every blossom type, including 'Annabelle,' but none of us had a wasp.

I think if members can learn one new thing from a program like this, it's great! One of our members, a long-time African violet grower, said that she learned what a Geneva-edged blossom looks like.

Next month, our program is going to be "Leaf Show & Tell," using page 12 in the book.

I was pleased to learn that the cover plant of *Growing to Show* is 'Fresh Air,' which is in my collection.

General Rules for Avoiding Pests and Diseases

By Jim Toms

It's surprising how we sometimes don't think of the little things that could cause us to bring pests and diseases into our plant collection. A little attention to basic cleanliness and avoidance of bad practices can save a lot of trouble later. The following are some general rules that I give to new members or beginners at collecting African violets to help them avoid grief as they get established in our hobby.

1. Isolate New Plants

Any plant joining your nice, clean collection of plants for the first time is a threat. Examine new plants closely when choosing them to be sure there are no visible signs of pests or disease. Then keep them separate from the main collection for 2-3 months until you are absolutely sure that no sign of pests or disease has appeared. If clean at this point, it is probably safe to move them into the main collection.

2. Inspect Your Plants Regularly

Check all the plants in your collection regularly. Look at the leaves and blossom stalks for signs of mildew or other growths. Knock each plant out of its pot periodically to look for signs of soil insects. Keep an eye on the saucers for signs of insects. Watch for plants that generally appear unhealthy. They may have the beginnings of crown rot, root rot, or various molds. Get to know the symptoms of all the common pests and diseases so you can be aware of what a plant's appearance is telling you. Should a plant be discovered with a problem, isolate it and treat it, or throw it out, depending on the nature of the problem. Watch adjacent plants in the future to see if they develop signs of the same problem.

3. Keep Your Plants Clean

You should trim off dying peduncles, spent blossoms, and tired outer leaves regularly. If left to stay beyond their time, they become ideal hiding spots for insects and disease spores. Keep the leaves free of dust and debris by brushing with a natural bristle brush or washing.

4. Keep Your Plant Area Clean

What applies to the plants also applies to the whole area. Dispose of plant trimmings in the garbage which should not be allowed to sit in the plant area. Keep your shelves free of dust and dirt. Wash them periodically.

5. Sterilize Your Tools and Containers

For economy's sake we all reuse our pots, saucers, trays, tools, etc. After each use, they should be washed in warm, soapy water. They should then be rinsed in clear water and allowed to stand for an hour in a solution of water and chlorine bleach (10% bleach). Rinse well and dry with clean cloths. Drying them by hand is extra labor, but it keeps them from retaining a strong bleach smell. You should clean in a similar way, any watering apparatus that you use. Store these items in a clean place where they cannot become contaminated before the next use.

6. Change Clothes After Outdoor Work

It is easy to transport pests and disease spores indoors on one's clothes. The best idea is to have an outfit that suits you personally and always change into it before working with your plants. If you have really been doing dirty work outdoors, you might want to bathe and wash your hair before working with the plants. Similarly, pets that have been outdoors should not be allowed to romp among the plants.

From the Lakeshore AVS *Newsletter*,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Coming Events Deadlines

January Issue - November 1
March Issue - January 1
May Issue - March 1
July Issue - May 1
September Issue - July 1
November Issue - September 1

REFLECTIONS OF A LIST-MAKER

The Honor Roll and Best Variety List
Their importance for the Violet Grower

By Floyd Lawson

The idea began in the late 1950's when the leadership of the AVSA sensed that with the growing number of cultivars available to its membership, there needed to be a way of indicating to growers, new and old, which varieties were the favorites. And, out of 1,000+ (at that time), which cultivars were worth the time and money.

So, the Society began to ask members to send in lists of their favorites and to publish the results in the AVM. It was in 1960 that the Society decided to declare that certain violets, which had been on members' list for five years, could be identified and added to an Honor Roll. The first year, seven violets were declared to be worthy of the first AVSA Honor Roll. The Best Variety List, and the growing Honor Roll have been published each year since 1960.

The full archive list of the Honor Roll from 1960 through 1998 was published in the May-June issue of the *African Violet Magazine* on pages 26 and 27, 1998. The updated list since that date is published yearly in the July-August edition.

From these sources, members could select their new choices and know that they would grow in a wide range of locations and settings.

Now that there are more that 15,000 varieties to choose from, it is all the more important to keep the Best Variety List and Honor Roll alive and growing.

I have served as the compiler of both lists for over a decade. What a joy it has been to catch an early view of the newer African violets which keep appearing on lists, and what a joy it is to see plants from around the world become so popular! At last count, Antarctica was the only continent not to check in with native bred African violets. We are truly a world-wide Society, and our hobby is "inter-continental."

Where do I get the information about which violets are most popular? Glad you asked!

Each year I submit a request to all AVSA affiliated clubs, through our Affiliate chair, asking that members of each affiliate send me their list of up to 25 of their favorite African violets. In addition, I place a post on as many email groups as I can, a request for the same information. The lists can come to me by US mail or by email. They can come grouped together in an affiliate club mailing, or as individual lists. The only thing I ask is that when they come as a group listening, EVERY violet mentioned is on the list, no matter how many or how few 'votes' it received. It is amazing how the smaller votes quickly add up to much larger amounts.

I then take the lists and speak them into voice-recognition software that recognizes species, unique names, and foreign titles. The results become the yearly Best Variety List, which is published in the AVM each November/December edition. When a variety has been on the Best Variety List for three successive years, it is crowned for the Honor Roll.

Then, members around the world contact their favorite vendor and add these winners to their collections.

It has been my pleasure to serve these past years, and it now keeps me busy...with lists and more lists!

The due date for the lists is July 31st each year to give me time to meet the AVM deadlines.

The rules are simple:
Send Floyd Lawson your individual or group list (up to 25 varieties per member) at this address: Floydll@earthlink.net

Or by post:

Floyd Lawson
20719 Madrona Av • Torrance, CA 90503

This is your list...to vote...to read...to grow.
I am looking forward to hearing from each of you!

What is a Clone?

By Ron Myhr

CLONE: a plant that is reproduced vegetatively. Genetically, it is *exactly* the same as the plant from which the cutting was taken.

This is different from being grown from seed, in which case the plants will be genetically different than the parent.

African violets produced from leaves and any plants produced from stem cuttings are all clones of the parent.

Sometimes the name is used to indicate a particular cultivar. For instance, if I grew a bunch of plants from seed, and one of them had particularly attractive flowers, I might propagate it vegetatively (from cuttings or leaves), and afterward say something like, "the clone that I saved has especially attractive flowers, twice as big as those from the other seedlings."

From a post on *Gesneriphiles Internet Group*
Reprinted in the Toronto Gesneriad Society *Newsletter*

Small Talk

By Laurel D. Goretsky

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I have been thinking lately that for many it may be difficult to be excited about anything with the economy the way it is. Thankfully, growing African violets remains a relatively inexpensive hobby.

I've mentioned a lot over the past year about keeping your collection at a manageable size. If you haven't had a chance to do so already, make it a point to do some "spring cleaning" as you prepare for summer. There are some steps to take to help your violets get through the summer when you may not be spending as much time with them as during the fall and winter.

Let's start with "spring cleaning." Have a good look at your miniatures and semiminiatures. To help you decide if there are any you need to remove, ask yourself, "Is this plant growing well in my conditions?", "Do I like how it looks?", and "Is it healthy?" If you answered "no" to any of these questions, you might want to consider removing it from your collection. This is not to say that you have to throw out your violet if it is not healthy. If it is a plant you really want to keep, isolate it, diagnose the problem, and apply the appropriate solution.

Is there a plant in your collection that you just aren't fond of? On occasion, I have purchased a plant that isn't in bloom. Then, when it does come into bloom, I don't care for the color or type of blossom. I would not throw the plant out, but would probably take it to a local club meeting and give it to someone who wants to grow it. We all have different things that appeal to us.

I love variegated miniatures and semiminiatures. However, some do not grow well in my conditions. I think 'Rob's Love Bite' is a gorgeous plant, but I can never seem to have one in which the variegation comes in like it should. In order to keep a manageable amount of violets that I am growing at one time, I have had to give someone else my 'Rob's Love Bite'. It doesn't mean I am through trying variegated miniature and semiminiatures. Currently, 'Rob's Flirtatious' and 'Cute Aza Bug' have proper and lovely variegated leaves. I am also not ready to totally give up on 'Rob's Love Bite.' I will try it again in the future. I want to stress that it is not the plant that is the problem, it is my growing conditions and culture that has affected the variegation.

When you are trying to manage how many plants you are growing, it should go without saying to throw out the ones that are dead!

Also, you may have a few more of the same variety. If a plant has suckered, you have probably started the suckers. When you have started a leaf cutting, you will most likely get more than one plant. You might be like me, and forget that you already have a plant in your collection and buy another of the same variety! Whatever the reason for having more than one variety, as you usually only need one plant, I would give away or sell the extras.

In the last column, I was describing saving some of my lost plants. I started two crowns of 'Persian Lace'. Both of the crowns have suckered so I will most likely start those crowns also. I don't need four plants of 'Persian Lace'. It is a delightful plant, but I don't have the space for multiples of one variety. Once I am sure that the plant is growing well, I will give away some of the extras to members of our club, or sell them at our show and sale.

Now that you have gotten your miniature and semiminiature collection to a size that is easier to maintain over the summer, there are a couple of things that will also help keep your violets growing.

My children are out of school in July and August, and we spend a lot of time away from home or outdoors. I want to ensure that my African violets to survive a reduced amount of attention over the summer months.

After conventions and our local show and sale are over, I disbud all my miniatures and semiminiatures. I also disbud the ones that I have in isolation that have been purchased from recent shows. By disbudding, I am trying to reduce the amount of time required to water and groom my plants. Also, with being outside so much, I am protecting my plants from bugs that thrive on blossoms (such as thrips). I never directly enter the plant room after I come in from outside. I shower and change first or wait until the next day before watering or grooming my violets. This may seem extreme but tiny bugs can easily ride in on you, your pets or children, and harm your collection.

I continue to disbud throughout the summer months because our children sometimes don't follow the same protocol as their parents. If a bug was to get in to the plant room, at least taking away their food source would keep things somewhat in control.

Another step I take to get my plants ready for summer is to cover most of them. Covering your miniatures and semiminiatures helps to hold in moisture. This is an especially good idea if you are going to be away for more than a few days. We try to have someone come in and water if we are away for an extended period of time, but even the best helper can have unforeseen events arise. If your plants are covered, they should still be fine, even with changes in the watering schedule.

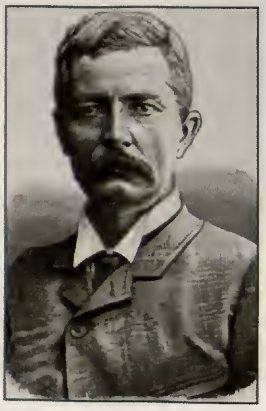
Until next time, stay happy and healthy, and keep on treasuring the little ones!

Dr. Livingstone, Those are African Violets, I Presume?

By Melvin Robey

Dr. David Livingstone

Who was the first of non-African ancestry to gaze upon the pretty little purple flowering plants? A good case can be made for the honor to go to Dr. David Livingstone. In the late 1800's, Dr. Livingstone was in search of the source of the Nile River in Africa. His journey took him through the heart of the area where the first African violet seeds were collected. If Livingstone had the first place honor, then second place has to be given to Henry Morton Stanley.



Henry Morton Stanley

The meeting of Stanley and Livingstone

It was at the end of Stanley's eight month trek across Tanzania in 1881 searching for Dr. Livingstone that Stanley made his famous greeting, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" Perhaps his second comment was, "Did you happen to notice all those unusual plants with those beautiful purple flowers?" If he did make this comment about the African violets, his first comment upon finding Dr. Livingstone has long since overshadowed it.

Stanley's journey, as near as I have been able to determine it, took him north of Mt. Tongwe, and then between the Nguru and Usambara Mountains. Mt. Kilimanjaro would also have dominated much of the skyline during this time. Since Stanley was a naturalist, it is easy to speculate that he noticed several of the *Saintpaulia* species during his journey. The ones he most likely saw would have been: *S. confusa, S. magungensis, S. orbicularis, S. shumensis, S. tongwensis,* and *S. velutina.* It is also easy to speculate that he never saw S. ionantha, since his journey started approximately two hundred miles north of the city Tanga, where the seed for this species was first collected in 1892. It should also be noted that the *Saintpaulia* species have been reclassified since this material was originally written.

* Excerpt from *African Violets: Back to the Basics*, by Melvin J. Robey. His next book, *African Violets: Gifts from Nature-Book One* will be available later this year. Visit www.africanvioletbooks.com for more information on this book.

From the *Empire Violet Magazine*, publication of the New York State AVS

IMPORTANT NOTICE: SENIOR JUDGES

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2009. Send **request to Meredith Hall, P. O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. Include check for $5.00, (payable to AVSA)** and proof of three blue ribbons as per AVSA Handbook, 2007 Edition, page 88. Allow three weeks for delivery. The completed examination must be returned before October 1, 2009 for grading. **Examinations may be received by attachment using Microsoft Word if requested. Please specify if it will be used as electronic copy or handwritten hard copy.**

Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination, should send check for $5.00 (payable to AVSA) to Mrs. Hall. Also send the following items of documentation of eligibility per AVSA Handbook.

1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedules of five AVSA shows judged, (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient).
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned, per AVSA Handbook, 2007 Edition, page 88.

Allow three weeks for delivery. Schedules and cards will be returned if a SASE is included with proper amount of postage. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2009 will be returned and application may be made next year.

No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2009. Please include email address and you will be notified of receipt of exam, or include a self addressed postcard and it will be returned upon arrival of exam.

A Family Portrait

By Georgene Albrecht

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Email: georgena@verizon.net

'Buckeye Serenity' is the name of this lovely new variety that won best in the Sport/Mutant Class at the Ohio State Show last year. Pat Hancock, of Middletown, OH, has produced many of these absolutely breath-taking variegated foliages with outstanding flowers. She is a fabulous grower. This plant is only six-months old. Look at those beautiful leaves. The blooms have that green, thick cell structure that lasts for such a long time. The bloom count is tops. Combine these characteristics with the handsome variegated foliage, and we have an outstanding plant. See the ad for Buckeye plants in this magazine. 'Buckeye Serenity' is a sport of 'Buckeye Seductress' which is a hybrid out of 'Buckeye Bridesmaid' by 'Picasso'.

Another of her varieties is 'Buckeye 'Buttercreme'; it is the best butter-colored double, large bloom I've seen to date. The color is very consistent, no matter the temperature.

Growers must always keep in mind that hot temperatures make color wash-out, while cooler temperatures make pigment more vivid. Also, we want to remind growers that variegated foliage does not like too much nitrogen, which is the first number in the formula of fertilizer. Hot temperatures and too much nitrogen will sometimes wipe out variegation completely.

Buckeye Serenity

LESS LIGHT

For the last three months, my lights have been on only eight hours a day. The result is less bloom. No bloom at all on the *Streptocarpus*, but I am hoping for a flush when the light hours are increased or the plants are placed closer to the lights. The foliage is larger, and there should be blooms when the light is increased. Tips of each leaf will be removed.

SAVING GREEN

Most of us are looking for ways to save environment and costs in this nasty economy. We have made an agenda to try to save every way we can. In addition to turning down the lighting hours, the heat is down to 62 degrees this winter. The plants don't really like it, and watering is difficult. It is better to have plants on the dry side when they are grown in cooler temperatures. Water lightly more often rather than soaking plants.

All of my larger gesneriads are going to go outside in May. Light fixtures will be off. We will limit the use of air conditioning, too. We will use "rain barrels" to save water on the outdoor plants. To get the most from my light fixtures, the plants will be placed as closely as possible. Watering may be more difficult, but all plants are grown in standard nursery trays so that they are easily pulled from the shelves.

I will recycle more of my acrylic blanket material used as watering mats. All my friends and neighbors collect the 11 x 22 inch black nursery trays for me, and they are traded at my local greenhouse for used plastic pots. Send me your ideas.

RESPONSE

My article called 'Viva Violets" has brought a few responses. My concern for the lack of violets as opposed to more gesneriads seems to be of little concern in other parts of the country. Three growers say that they need more gesneriads in the shows and wish more of their club members grew them. Two letters also suggested that each club should judge for themselves the limiting of certain plants based on circumstances. One lady said her club once needed gesneriads shown because a major grower had problems and could not enter her violets. My article did not mean to eradicate gesneriads, just limit the number of entries to have a balanced number of plants. Certainly, clubs have the right to customize show schedules. I do believe that African violets must be the majority of entries.

Plant Hormones

By Nancy Carr

Plant hormones, or phytohormones, are chemicals produced by the plant that regulate plant growth. The hormones are produced in very small amounts and are transported through the plant's tissues to the areas in which they are needed. The movement of hormones uses the same vascular tissues that move water up from the roots (xylem) and sugars down from the leaves (sieve tubes). The effect of a hormone on the targeted cells depends on the stage of plant development.

There are five types of plant hormones, of which two are of interest for African violets: Abscisic acid (causes dormancy); Ethylene (causes ripening of fruit); Gibberellins (promotes growth); Auxins; Cytokinins. We can use plant hormones to enhance our plant's growth.

Auxins and cytokinins are of interest because they are commercially available in synthetic form as plant-growth regulators. The synthetic hormone is generally more stable and cheaper than the naturally occurring forms.

Auxins can cause several responses in plants, including promoting uniform flowering, promoting fruit set, and promoting the initiation of adventitious roots. It is the last listed response that we are most interested in for African violet growth. Auxins are the active ingredient in most rooting compounds, specifically indole-3-butyric acid (IBA). IBA is a naturally occurring auxin but it can also be synthesized in the lab. (An interesting note: some of the synthetic auxins are used as herbicides where when used at very high doses, they promote uncoordinated growth resulting in death of the plants, particularly broad leaf weeds.)

Cytokinins are compounds that promote cell division, among other things, in plants. There are a large number of synthetic cytokinins. As a group they are used in tissue culture media to stimulate buds.

In my plant room I have both auxins and cytokinins used as plant growth regulators. I have two preparations of auxins in rooting hormone. One is a dry powder - GreenLight Rooting Hormone, and the other is a gel - Clonex. I have one preparation of cytokinin - Keiki Grow.

When I am repotting my violets and have removed a lot of leaves, there is a neck to pot down. Sometimes the neck is so long or the plant is diseased, so I have to cut the roots off. I then put one of the auxin preparations on the neck. The dry powder can be dabbed on the scraped surface with a small artist's brush. Blow off the excess, then place the plant in the soilless mix. The gel can be 'painted' on the scraped surface of the neck with a cotton swab. Using these rooting products help the plant recover faster from the repotting as long as there are some roots left. If you have to cut the root ball off, I find it is necessary to place the plant in a mini-greenhouse using a plastic bag until new roots have developed.

I have found the Rooting Hormone dry powder and the Clonex gel work very well for repotting. I tried dipping some African violet leaves in the dry powder to see if it would develop plantlets quicker. I found that lots of roots developed rather quickly, but it took forever for the new leaves to appear. The same thing happened with Clonex. African violets are so easy to propagate from leaves, they don't need any help.

Where African violets do need help is in propagation of chimeras. This is where the cytokinins are used. Cytokinins are in the agar for tissue culture. The agar also has some nutrients for plant growth. Slices of the apical meristem (the growth point of the crown) are placed on the agar. Once the shoots or leaves appear and are large enough, they can be put into soil and roots will develop.

The cytokinin preparation I have in my plant room is Keiki Grow (benzyladenine). The preparation is a paste which was developed for use with orchids to clone a plant. With African violets, Keiki Grow is used to induce sucker formation on a chimera blossom stem at the point where the tiny leaves (bracts) attach. A very small amount of Keiki Grow is placed on the tip of a sharp object like a toothpick or needle. The needle or toothpick is then used to scratch the blossom stem at the point where the bract attaches to the stem and as the scratch is made, some Keiki Grow is deposited. The blossom remains on the plant and is tagged so it isn't accidentally removed during grooming. This procedure is described by Janet Stromberg at the website listed under references. I have not tried this myself.

I did try with Keiki Grow on trailers. On a bare stem of a trailer, I scratched some Keiki Grow in at a point where there was a leaf. I also poked a couple of holes along the stem, between leaf nodes. I got a few tiny leaves at the leaf node but nothing between the nodes. I have not been able to follow through to see if the leaves developed into a crown. It is on my 'to do' list. But, if it is possible that it could develop into a plantlet for orchids, I expect a crown would develop on the African violet trailer stem.

Using synthetic plant growth regulators developed from plant hormones is an easy way to encourage plant growth.

References:

"Plant Hormone" Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plant_Hormone

"A Guide to Chimera African Violet Propagation Using Kekigrow Plus", Janet Stromberg, www.geocities.com/rachelsreflections/keiki.htm?200914"Plant Hormones" Michael Knee, Ohio State Univ. http://hcs.osu.edu/hcs300/hormone.htm

"Cytokinins" www.plant-hormones.info/cytokinins.htm

From the Columbus, OH, African Violet Society *African Violet Notes*

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

Susan Hapner - *Chairman*

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TOTALS: $460.00

The Once and Future Violet

April 11-18, 2010 Raleigh NC

By Tom Glembocki

Now that the Reno convention is a memory, it's time to look forward to next year, 2010. AVSA has chosen Raleigh, NC to be the host city for the 64th annual AVSA convention and show. This will be the first AVSA convention in Raleigh, NC.

When the steering committee was being assembled last year in Tulsa, OK, it was decided that Convention Chair would be Tom Glembocki. Rich Follett agreed to be Vice Convention Chair, but we needed a very capable Show Chair. Rich Follett has a background in Drama, so with dramatic flair, he went into the Tulsa Commercial salesroom and got down on bended knee before a small assembled crowd of onlookers and "proposed" to Brenda Petry to accept the Show Chair position. Brenda said "yes", and the 2010 convention was on its way.

We had a series of meetings in the fall of 2008, and the theme "The Once and Future Violet" was agreed upon. We were pleased to have AVSA award-winning designer, Olive Ma Robinson, create a beautiful logo representing our theme. "The Once and Future Violet" will be a show celebrating a theme of violets through the ages, from the early species, vintage, and classic varieties, to today's exciting new hybrids.

Laurene Jones, Vice Show Chair, created a show schedule reflecting the violet timeline throughout the years. This schedule is designed to honor all the ages and periods of African violet discovery and development.

As with other recent AVSA National conventions, the "Once and Future Violet" is a cooperative effort across many AVSA affiliates. We are reaching out across the country trying to fill all the slots a National Convention requires. We're looking for a souvenir book chairman, as well as chairpersons for the President's Reception, Information Table, Presentations Assistant, and Hospitality. Contact Tom Glembocki at 919-362-8532 or tom@maavs.org if you would like to help.

It's not too early to mark your calendars now, April 11 – 18, 2010, for an African Violet Society's Convention and Show in Raleigh, North Carolina!

Captured by the Episcias

By John Beaulieu
Illustrations and photos by author

I'm sure everyone can remember when they first became interested in African violets or the other gesneriads. As long as I can remember, there was always at least a couple African violets growing on the windowsills, and I really did not pay any more attention to them than I did to the spider plants or other common houseplants around the house. This all changed when in 1980 I dropped in to view the annual flower show of our local horticultural society.

One of the members had entered a very large *Episcia* plant, but I had no idea what it was. After the show, when she was carrying out the plant, a piece fell off and I picked up the stolon to give it to her. She said "That's okay, you can have it." Well, I didn't know what to do with it, but she explained that if I just stuck it in the dirt, it would root. Sure enough, it did root and grow. I was now hooked!

I learned that this was an *Episcia*, like the African violets this was another member of the gesneriad family. I also found out that there was an upcoming gesneriad show in Toronto, which was only about an hour drive from home. I came home from the show with at least six other varieties of *Episcia* and soon my collection began to grow... and grow...and grow!

Thanks to many knowledgeable growers in the area, I quickly learned about proper potting mixes, light requirements, and of course, how easily *Episcia* were propagated by rooting the stolons, or runners, that they

This Episcia 'Cleopatra,' shows that even a small starter plant will produce stolons.

My original collection in the upstairs hallway.

A selection of episcia at Peterson's greenhouses.

Watercolor of Episcia 'Vacationland'

eagerly produce. Before long, I set up a light in an upstairs hallway to house my ever-growing collection. I started looking up commercial growers that I could visit in my quest for new episcias and, of course, other gesneriads as well.

I discovered that there were often gesneriad conventions within driving range and on the way, there were interesting greenhouses that specialized in these plants. I discovered Granger Gardens south of Cleveland, Tinari's in Philadelphia, Lyon's near the Adirondacks, and Peterson's in Cincinnati.

Perterson's was particularly interesting, as they had an entire greenhouse devoted to *Episcia*. There was a selection of all the varieties they carried displayed on the first bench as you entered the greenhouse. Unfortunately, Peterson's, and Granger's are no longer in business.

I then learned of a local Ontario commercial operation that was closing up, and I purchased several stands, plants, and other equipment from Wood's African Violets. Now, I had converted my entire basement into a plant growing area!

The next evolution in propagation was to learn how to pollinate, hybridize, and grow from seed. I had a few interesting seedlings in the mid 1980s and named some, distributing them at horticultural clubs where I gave slide presentations on gesneriads. The excitement that I got from growing these plants made me want to share the information and fun with others.

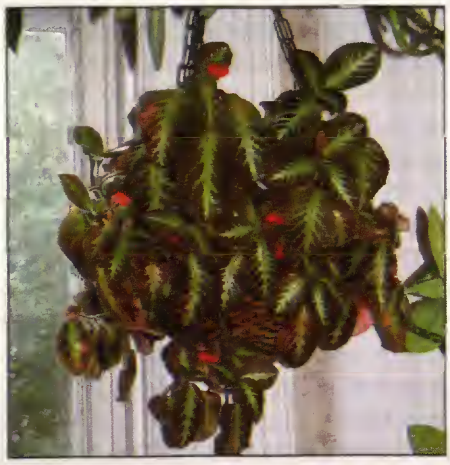
The most popular of my early *Episcia* hybrids were, 'Huronia Holiday,' 'Vacationland' and 'Kempenfest.' It has been a while since I have seen any of them at a show or listed in a catalog; and I no longer have them myself - but wish I did.

Over the years, I have had a varied interest in other Gesneriads, and now mainly grow sinningias. However, I always maintain a few episcias, and even keep hybridizing with them a little bit. Unless the resulting plant is really special, I would not name and register it, but for my own identification I will still give my "keepers" a name. The latest being Episcia 'Sonoma,' named for my red truck which is the same color as the flowers.

Episcias captured my attention almost thirty years ago, and continue to do so. If you have been wanting to expand into other gesneriads, give the episcias a try - but like chips, you can't stop at just one!

A sturdy 8-foot stand from Wood's African Violets, soon became full as the Episcia collection grew.

The fuzzy leaved Episcia 'Kempenfest' was one of my most popular hybrids during the 1980s.



Episcia 'Sonoma' growing in a south facing window.

WATERING/WICKS/RESERVOIRS/ALGAE

By Annette Kennedy

WATERING

Watering your plants allows them to stay hydrated and is the most convenient way to feed them, as food and water can be applied at the same time. When doing this, be sure to follow the instructions on your plant food and make sure it is suitable for your watering method. The most common way of watering African violets today is "wick watering." Very simply, this is where a wick is inserted into the pot before the plant is potted into it. The pot then sits on a reservoir, and water is absorbed through the wick to the plant. The wick must be long enough to reach to the bottom of the reservoir. If you choose this method, be sure to use a soilless potting mix. If you buy a plant from a nursery, chances are the potting mix will hold too much water if you just put a wick into it. The plant would need to be repotted into a lighter potting mix.

African violets may also be watered from the top or into the saucer. When doing this, any excess water after 1/2 hour must be tipped out so that the plant does not become too wet. When watering using a saucer, it can be a good idea to put small pebbles into the saucer so that the plant is not sitting directly in the water.

When wick watering, if growing conditions are cold, (as during winter) wicks should be withdrawn from water until conditions are warmer. This is because the plant is not growing or using as much water as it does during warmer weather.

WICKS

It is important to use the right type of wick if you are wick watering your African violets. If you use a cotton cord, it will soon rot because it is constantly wet. You will find it floating in the reservoir, and your plant will dry out.

Therefore, it is recommended to use synthetic cord. The one I use is a type of venetian blind cord. With this, there are various weaves, some tighter than others, so if the weave is too tight, it will not draw up. Venetian blind cord also comes in cotton so it is important to ask for nylon cord.

Other options which many growers choose are eight ply nylon/acrylic wool, or nylon pantyhose cut into thin strips. For miniature African violets, I use four-ply acrylic wool, as the plants are in smaller pots and don't need as much water as would be drawn up through a thicker cord.

It is recommended to soak new wicks in water with a few drops of detergent added. This wets the wicks and allows the yarn to conduct water easily.

There are may ways of inserting the wicks into the pot.

1. Put the wick through a hole in the base of the pot and about 1/2 way up into the pot.
2. Put the wick through a hole in the base of the pot and out another hole, so that there are two threads hanging out the bottom.
3. Put the wick into the pot, then coil it round inside the bottom of the pot.

Choose what you are happy with and only change if it is not working for you.

When wick watering, if growing conditions are cold, (as during winter) wicks should be withdrawn from water until conditions are warmer. This is because the plant is not growing or using as much water as it does during warmer weather.

RESERVOIRS

These are essentially a container to hold water. If you have several plants, you might like to use a larger container which holds several plants and saves you watering each one individually. A cat litter tray with a wire mesh is good for this. However, for individual plants, there are several alternatives limited only by your imagination. The most popular and aesthetically pleasing is the pot well. It comes in two parts and is easily clipped together. The clear base is easy to see when your plants need watering. It is also stable. Another popular method is to use any type of "take-out" container, and by making a small hole in the lid, the plant can sit on top with the wick going through the hole into the water. Take-out containers are great if you are going away, because all you need to do is use a larger container depending on how long you are going to be gone.

ALGAE

Algae is caused when you use a container such as the potwell or takeaway container. These are clear so light gets through, and your water will become green and not very nice looking. The way to stop this is to keep out the light, but then you won't be able to see when to water your plants. So the easiest way is just to wash out your reservoirs on a regular basis. If you don't, the wick may be clogged

with algae and stop drawing up water. You can easily dip the plant into a bowl of water and give the wick a gentle wash or do this under a tap of slow running water. By using a colored container, such as an ice cream or soup container, the light will not penetrate, and no algae will form.

Editor's Note: *Another popular way to keep algae from your wicking reservoirs is to line them with inexpensive plastic bags, and discard the bags when algae is present.*

From the *Newsletter* of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

My Method of Growing Episcias

By Leonard Re

Episcias can be successfully grown in drier climates. I live in Southern California, which is a semi-arid climate. I'm about five miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, with a temperature range in the 60-80° F. (15.5 - 27°C.) most of the year. Our humidity runs around 30-40%.The main exception occurs in the Oct-Nov timeframe when the winds reverse and blow from the desert to the ocean. During this time, the temps increase to the 90°'s F. (32°C.) and the humidity drops to the 10-15% range.

I grow most of my episcias uncovered, except for some of the pinks, such as 'Unpredictable Helen', 'Unpredictable Valley' and 'Cleopatra.' I use my standard African violet mix (peat moss, vermiculite, perlite (1-1-1) with a little dolomite lime and charcoal. I use the same fertilizers that are used on my African violets. This is a rotation of Dyn-a-Gro – 1/2 tsp. to a gallon of water; Jack's Bloom Booster (10/30/10) – 1/4 tsp to a gallon of water, Eleanor's VF-11 – 4 capfuls to a gallon of water and Urea free Orchid fertilizer (20/10/20) – 1/4 tsp to a gallon of water. I also use distilled water, adding 10 drops of "pH up" per gallon.

All episcias are grown either under a four-light fixture (using cool whites), or right next to the light stand on individual TV trays. They all receive an early morning misting with the distilled water (including the PH up additive but no fertilizer). I like to start my episcias by planting three sturdy stolons into an Oyama pot. After they are established, and have developed about three additional stolons on each original stolon, I transplant them into a large 6" pan pot using two wicks for proper water absorption. By removing the extra stolons (beyond 3 or 4) and the flowers, I have larger foliage with better coloration. I certainly enjoy growing Episcias, and especially love those recently developed by Thad Scaggs and Betty Cessena.

Red-Backed Leaves and Those with Variegation

With red-backed leaves, the cause is genetic. Some varieties of African violet have a gene which produces red pigment on the reverse side of the leaf. In some cases where this gene for red back color is present, its effects are not found on all areas of the leaf. This is why you get some plants that have both green and red areas on the back of the leaf. In most red-backed varieties, the gene is passed on from parent plant to baby plant, but there are cases where it is variable. Some of the babies will have red backs and some won't. I have a clump of babies right in front of me that has some dark green babies with red-backed leaves and some medium green ones with green backs. The variety is called 'Rob's Rinky Dink', and it seems to do this every time I propagate it. Incidentally, the difference in intensity of the green on the front of the red-backed ones is an effect caused by the red back. The dark ones are actually the same shade of green as the medium green ones, but the dark red color below prevents light coming through from the other side, giving a darker appearance.

Increased amounts of light as you move plants closer to the fluorescents will increase the intensity of a red back or make it show up if it was not readily apparent in the first place.

You have probably seen variegated African violets which have pink variegation rather than white. Actually, what appears to be pink variegation is really white variegation on a red-backed leaf. In this case, the red is seen from the top as well as beneath, and appears like more of a pink shade.

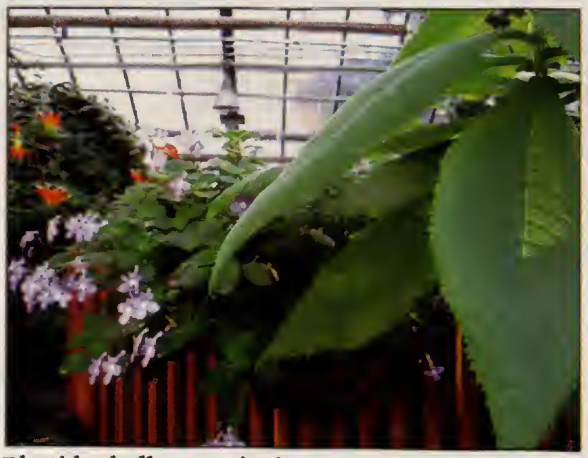
Saintpaulia ionantha is the wild species of African violet that most of the genetic heritage of the cultivated varieties comes from. It has red backed leaves, but many of the other wild species do not, and they also play some role in the heritage of the cultivated varieties. You can then understand how a mix of red-backed and green-backed varieties has come to exist.

A variegated leaf with lots of white in it will take a much longer time to produce baby plants than one with a good amount of green. The whiter-than-white leaf cannot produce much food. The reason is that the green coloring in the leaf comes from chlorophyll, and it is also the chlorophyll that is the leaf's internal "food factory". The less green that is seen, the less food that leaf can produce for its own growth or the growth of baby plants. The general rule when propagating variegated plants is to choose a leaf with lots of green (i.e. chlorophyll) in it. You should apply this rule when you are cutting a leaf from one of your own plants and when you are choosing a leaf that is for sale. Go for the greenest!

From *Chatter*, publication of the AVS of Canada
From the Q & A section of the AVSC website (www.avsc.ca)

Gesneriads in Winter at Montreal Botanical Garden

By Judy Zinni • Photographs by Judy Zinni



Rhytidophyllum auriculatum, Streptocarpella, and Aeschynanthus x splendidus

On a recent business trip to Montreal, with temperatures in the -30's Celsius, a serious horticultural feast for the eyes was in order. Luckily, the Montreal Botanical Garden's Gesneriad and Begonia (G-B) Conservatory was only a short cab ride away. Strolling through the many conservatories that the gardens offer, the snowy scenes outdoors melting into tropical lushness. I pleasantly noted how many Montrealers were strolling in the greenhouses. The conservatories were not frustratingly crowded but were definitely busy. I guess they were longing for some reminder of the warmer weather as well.

A lovely *Aeschynanthus x splendidus* greets visitors as they enter the G-B conservatory – it was in bloom with its cheery orange and yellow flowers. Further down the pathway, several *Chiritas*, some blooming and some not, were displayed with *Gesneria ventricosa* and several species of Begonias.

Aeschynanthus x splendidus

Excellent specimens featuring interesting foliage were displayed to tempt the viewer – the puckered and dark-leaved *Episcia 'Blue Nile'*, the beautifully velvety *Corytoplectus captitatus*, the richly dark-leaved unnamed *Nautilocalyx*. A number of species and hybrid *Nematanthus* (*N. fornix* with its red pouches, N. 'Freckles') and *Aeschynanthus* (*A. lobbianus, A. longicaulis* with lovely mottled leaves) were on display. It was interesting

Rhytidophyllum auriculatum

to see several well-grown specimens of *Rhytidophyllum auriculatum* with unusual green and maroon flowers. A really lovely plant that I've grown before, *Gesneria rupincola,* showed lots of neon orange blooms, although it had grown into quite a gangly specimen. A soft apricot-flowered *Drymonia*, listed as *D. alloplectoides*, was blooming. A large basket of *Columnea erythrophaea* (from Mexico) had lots of buds, but sadly was not blooming yet. I chuckled at the long-stemmed basket of *Codonanthe carnosa* (about 5 ft. long with a few white flowers open), as it reminded me of "Cousin Itt" from the Addams Family TV show.

An elderly woman struck up a conversation with me near a small collection of *Streptocarpus*; she only spoke French (and I have very little French), but I gather she grew a specimen at home with pink flowers and was delighted to see other examples with purple and white blossoms. The Streptocarpellas were well-represented in this conservatory with a number of heavily-blooming baskets, and plants exhibited within the planting beds.

I thought that there would be a collection of *Saintpaulia*, as this genus is the most recognized gesneriad by the general public. Alas, only one *S. rupicola*, happily growing on a rock, was on display. I would dearly love to see a collection of well-grown *Saintpaulia* species on exhibit at a public garden. There is such a simple beauty in the species, and most people are only acquainted with the many hybrids (although they are lovely as well).

Of course, I had to explore the other conservatories, although I was running out of time. There were two

Corytoplectus captitatus

Corytoplectuscaptitatus

conservatories dedicated to cacti and succulents, and the textures, plant forms, and exquisite blooms were wonderful to see. Another room had a lovely selection of orchids; two interesting miniature specimens were attracting a lot of attention (one was an *Oncidium 'Fragrance Fantasy'*). Yet another room housed an exquisite collection of Penjing. This is a highly spiritual Chinese art form, where the practitioner creates miniaturized landscapes - some containerized miniature trees (similar to Japanese Bonsai), others were landscapes that chiefly used rocks. Some of the tree specimens were very old (over a hundred years old).

It was quite a chore to put on my winter coat, scarf, and gloves to brave the outdoor elements once again. But I have made myself a promise to visit this garden again, in the summertime. Perhaps in June, when the vast collection of roses are in full bloom! I can't wait.

Codonanthecarnosal

Strawberry Fair

New Cultivar from

Margaret Taylor, Australia

Smaller Gesneriads

By Marge Huntley

Chirita

Members of our Gesneriad Study Group are currently growing some of the smaller species of these gesneriads. We find them rewarding; they are naturally symmetrical and flower early. *Chirita subrhomboidea, linearifolia, longgangensis,* and *tamiana* are among those that will be seen on the show bench soon.

My experience indicates that chiritas do not require too large a pot, and they resent over-watering or too much fertilizer.

Gesneria

Several species and hybrids are grown by members. Flowers are orange or yellow. They grow easily from seed and flower when young. A little extra dolomite should be added to the mix, which should never be allowed to dry out. This is one of the few Gesneriads that will not recover if allowed to dry out to the point of wilting.

I have had some American Swift's Moist-rite pots for years. I did not find them of much use, but they are wonderful for growing Gesnerias. The tiny holes do not allow much water through to the soil mix so one fill keeps going for a long time.

Episcia

A tiny trailer is *E.* 'Toy Silver.' A larger trailer is *E.* 'Silver Skies.' Both have silver leaves with a brownish edge and the usual orange-red blooms. Keep the stolons pinched off when young, and you will develop a nice plant.

Petrocosmea

These small plants have leaves and flowers not unlike an African violet. They are mostly grown from seed, which germinates readily, but the tiny plants are not easy to grow or to get through the winter. *Petrocosmea formosa* took our eye when it was on the cover of The Gloxinian, Volume 48, No.1.

Sinningia

The tiny miniature *Sinningia pusilla* has mauve flowers. It is often grown in a covered container, such as a brandy balloon. A little charcoal is placed in the bottom, then a small quantity of soil. Watering should be needed very seldomly. *Sinningia* 'White Sprite' is a white version of *S. pusilla* though not such a prolific grower. These tiny plants self-seed so readily that it is almost impossible to grow just one plant. As soon as the flower drops, the seed-pod develops, ripens quickly, and scatters its seed onto the potting mix, so very soon you have a full pot of dear little flowering plants.

To show these tiny ones at their best, all spent stems should be carefully cut off. If planted in a glass container, it must be spotless; don't forget the soil-line, where the glass will need to be cleaned with a cotton bud, actually, several cotton buds; as one is soiled, replace with a fresh one.

Miniature sinningias

Newer hybrids constantly appear, and colors are becoming more striking. Pots for these should be about 2 inch and shallow. African violet potting mix is used, and plants grow best with high humidity and good light. Plants appear worn and shabby after flowering, and foliage should be cut off, leaving a short stub. When new growth commences, repot into fresh soil. Fertilizer should be well diluted. Good varieties include *S.* 'Danielle,' *S.* 'Dollbaby,' *S.* 'Cherry Chips,' and *S.* 'Super Orange.' They have either single or double flowers in shades of white, pink, red, and purple, and many with streaks or spots of a contrasting color in the throat. Most grow very compactly while others grow taller and make more crowns.

Streptocarpus

Among the smaller growing species is *Streptocarpus rimicola,* which is a unifoliate (one leaf) with lots of tiny white flowers. Max Decking wrote that it is the smallest *Streptocarpus* species in cultivation and is suitable for a terrarium. Unfortunately, it is also monocarpic (dies after blooming), so needs to be kept going from seed. Of *S. stomandrus*, Max wrote "very low and compact with light green leaves. Upright to three inches. Many beautiful flowers. Very good under lights." I have one tiny plant germinated from very old seed so I may be able to find out if he is correct. *S. cyanandrus* is a small species with bloom diffused with magenta pink and magenta stripes. Not a particularly long liver, it blooms well for several years, and is generous with its seed. *S. saxorum* is a trailer with small grey-green leaves. Many light blue flowers with a white throat on long wiry pedicels. It makes a lovely hanging basket, and grows and blooms out doors in climates warmer than Melbourne, Australia.

Hybridizers have developed smaller *Streptocarpus* by introducing the miniature species. Most growers favor the smaller *Streptocarpus* hybrids over the longer foliaged, larger-flowered plants of the past. *S.* 'Mighty Mouse' is the smallest I have grown. Some favorites are *S.* 'Joker,' 'Athena,' 'Kim,' and 'Gloria.' *S.* 'Falling Stars' has masses of bloom, but develops into a larger specimen. Good growing.

From the *Newsletter* of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

Collections

By Nancy Carr

After hearing a talk by Kent Stork to our club about choosing a show plant, I am going to include some of his suggestions in this article about Collections.

What is a Collection? They are defined in the Show schedule. In general, a collection consists of three different, REGISTERED, African violet standard, semiminiature, miniature, trailer, or species plants. There were three collection classes in the Columbus AVS (OH) 2006 show schedule - Classes 1, 2, and 3. Class 1 was the "AVSA Collection of 3 different registered varieties all of the same type: Standard plants, or Standard trailers, all Species."

Class 2 was the miniature, semiminiature plants, or miniature, semiminiature trailers.

And Class 3 was three plants hybridized in Ohio.

So the Show schedule tells you what type of plants to include in your collection. The important thing to remember is that *they must be registered varieties*. (Aside: there were no Gesneriad collections in the show.)

At the AVSA National Show, there are other collection classes: Ralph Robinson gives a big ribbon and monetary prize for the best Robinson hybrid collection. This includes Olive's Ma series hybrids. Pat Hancock gives a prize for the best Buckeye series collection, and the Holtkamps give a prize ($300 and a big ribbon) for the best Holtkamp hybridized collection, either Optimara or Rhapsodie. So you can win big prizes if you win one of these classes.

What is so special about collections? Generally, these are the best plants in the show. AVSA requires that each plant be point scored and attain a score of 90 or more in order for the collection to be eligible for the AVSA best and second best rosettes. Often the Best in Show plant comes from the collection classes too.

How do we get a collection for the show? What's the plan?

Kent Stork said that several months before the show, you should engage the selection process. Look at your plants. Choose those that have good symmetry, that bloom, and in general grow well for you. If you are buying new plants, choose those that are past winners at shows. These plants have a proven track record and should perform well for you.

Paraphrasing Kent's thought, have a "focus." Put the plants you want to grow for show on one plant stand, or in one area where you can concentrate on caring for them. Your other plants will have to withstand some minimal care while you focus on your show plants.

Now is the time to clean up a plant stand, wash trays, pots, reservoirs, etc. Choose your plants. How many? Well, each collection is three plants, so get five or six of the same type. Put them on your clean, special plant stand or area. Give them lots of space and good light for 12-14 hours per day. When it comes time to show your plants - you should have three for a collection, and a couple extra for the other horticulture classes.

From *African Violet Notes*,
publication of the Columbus AVS (OH)

BITS AND BYTES

By Betty Tapping

I have, on occasion, been asked to explain the difference between GENUS, SPECIES, HYBRID, CULTIVAR, and VARIETY, so bear with me while I try to do so in simple language.

GENUS: is a related group of plants whose species have more in common with one another than they do with other genera (genera is the plural of genus). The genus and species names together constitute the botanical name of a plant - the genus name always standing first. It is capitalized and italicized.

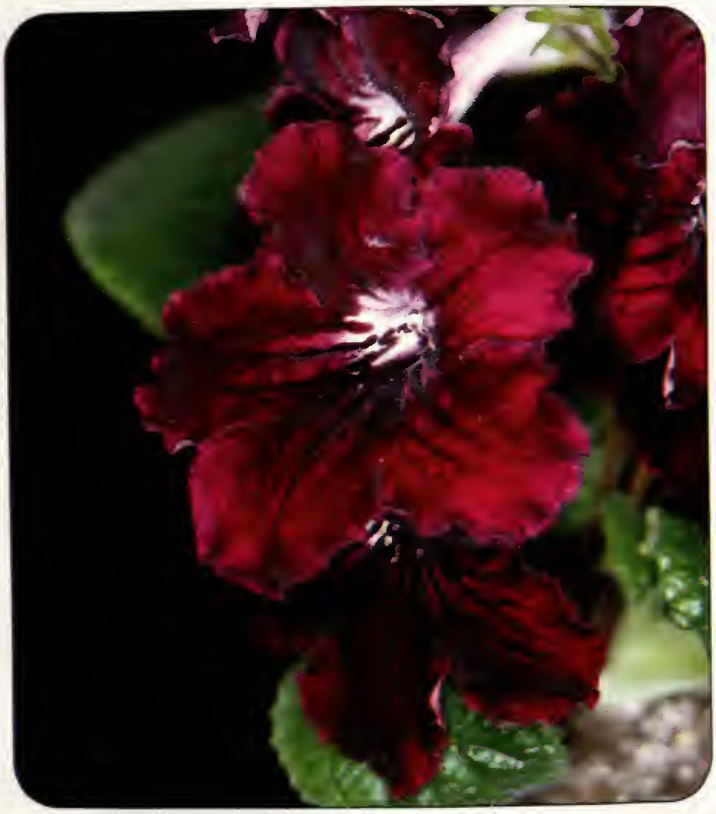
SPECIES: The species name follows immediately after the name of the genus to which it belongs It is a group of closely related plants within a genus, having characteristics which consistently breed true. It is written in italics and lowercase.

CULTIVAR: is short for cultivated variety. The usual definition of a cultivar is a variety that has originated or persisted under cultivation and when reproduced keeps its own characteristics. It may be a variant of a species, a sport or mutation of a species or from hybrid material. Cultivars are named by the person who discovers or introduces them, and the names are written in plain (not italic) type and enclosed with single quotes; for example Eucodonia 'Adele.'

HYBRIDS: are new plants produced by crossing two genetically different parent plants, either two different species within a genus - or two different genera. Hybrids are generally developed with a view to making some improvement in the characteristics of the parent plants. Inter-generic hybrids involve crossing two different genera. The hybrid name is a combination of the names of both genera and are written with a capital X followed by the new genus name: for example XCodonatanthus (Codonanthe x Nematanthus). Inter-species hybrids are the result of a cross between two species of one genus, and usually written with an x between the names of the species; for example Kohleria 'Flirt' (K. villosa x K. amabilis), and if it has not been named, only the formula is used.

VARIETY: a group of plants subordinate to a species showing one or more difference from other plants in the species. True or botanical varieties occur naturally (meaning they are not the work of hybridizers) and their characteristics are passed on to succeeding generations.

From the Toronto Gesneriad Society *Newsletter*



Streptocarpus 'Sultan's Ruby'

Exhibited by: ***Beverley Williams***

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Sinningia 'Roch co2-05'

Hybridized and Exhibited by: ***David Harris***

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Jolly Frills

Hybridized and Exhibited by: ***Hortense Pittman***

Semiminiature

A Year of Wicking Dangerously

By Mary S. Schaeffer

You know that piece of advice about trying new things on your African violet collection; the warning to always start small? It applies to wicking as well as other things. I learned this the hard way. Of course, that wasn't the only mistake I made in the wicking department, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Background

I started acquiring violets in a reasonable manner, buying three at a flower show, and then several months later adding a few more. However, in our house, there was no such thing as throwing a leaf away. If one was broken in either shipping or transporting home, it was immediately given a small drink of water and then placed in some soil for rooting. And, on that trip home from the flower show, several leaves were broken.

About the time I placed that second order, I joined several online discussion groups. Many of the folks who participate are quite generous, and there was rarely an offer I didn't jump on. If someone had extra plants they were willing to send for postage, I was there. Before long, I had a swap list posted and had plants coming and going. Of course, any leaf that was broken was potted up and sometimes potted a second time after I had removed the first set of babies. And, yes, no violet baby ever went on the compost heap.

There was a good side to all this potting. I always had plants to share with friends and visitors and that first winter, despite only owning a handful of plants, there were flowers all over my sunroom. However, the violets were taking over – and we were planning a 10-day vacation to Hawaii. The trip had been planned for some time, and I knew I was going to have to do something about keeping ALL those violets watered while we were gone. At that point, I had several hundred in three ounce solo cups, along with quite a few in regular pots.

The solution to my watering dilemma was simple: wick all the plants and do it quickly.

I had read about soaking the wicks ahead of time, perhaps with a drop of dishwashing detergent to ensure proper water flow. I had reasoned, obviously incorrectly, that I could wet the wicks at the same time I watered the plants.

The Next Few Mistakes

A few weeks before the trip, I took the plunge and ordered 12 trays with egg crating and got ready to wick everything. One of the few things I did do right, by the way, was ordering Physan-20 to control the algae. I got out some old yarn and cut wicks for those plants that did not have them. Some of my trades had come with wicks so I felt I was ahead of the game on that front.

It took one whole weekend, but I got many of those small plants wicked and onto the trays with the egg crating. As I had read, I used a crochet hook to get the yarn into the plant. I did have enough sense to water from the top and fill the trays with water.

What Happened

Miraculously, some of the wicks started working. Many didn't. Thus, I had to water quite a few of the plants from the top more than once. While there is nothing wrong with top watering, it tends to knock a little soil from the plant into the tray. This makes them look unsightly despite the lack of algae (thanks to the Physan-20).

Since our trip was in November, the few wicks that were not working did not present a problem. In hindsight, the whole collection would have probably been just fine if I had watered right before we left and then immediately upon our return – although this probably wouldn't have been true in the summer.

Around this time I also slowly started putting some of my larger plants that were not involved in the tray debacle on individual reservoirs, made primarily from deli containers. They benefited from the mistakes I had made with the trays.

Lessons Learned

Where to start; I made so many mistakes with my great wicking experiment. Besides not plunging all or most of your collection into a new growing approach, the other painful message is to read and follow all the directions. Don't take shortcuts.

I had read about soaking the wicks ahead of time, perhaps with a drop of dishwashing detergent to ensure proper water flow. I had reasoned, obviously incorrectly, that I could wet the wicks at the same time I watered the plants. After all, it is much easier to work with dry wicks. And, while it is true that dry wicks are definitely easier to work with, that is irrelevant if the dry wicks don't work.

Assuming I have not scared you away from wicking, here are some guidelines that will help you avoid a debacle similar to mine:

1) Thoroughly soak the wicks ahead of time, with a drop of dishwashing detergent in the water mix. I now keep my unused wicks in a small container of water so they are ready whenever I need them.

2) You can use acrylic yarn, panty hose, or special wicking purchased from specialty sellers. Just make sure you cut them long enough. In my opinion, too long is better than not quite long enough.

3) Regularly check your plants on wicks to make sure the wicks are still drawing. Some will stop for no good reason. Also, occasionally a wick will manage to come out of the water and curl up.

4) Make sure the wick is working when you start; don't assume it is. I water from the top over the sink until I see water running down the wick. Alternatively, you can soak the plant with the wick in a bowl of water for 10-20 minutes.

5) Consider the size of the pot and size/number of wicks you use. I eventually took most of my three ounce solo cups off wicks and only use wicks for pots two inches or larger. I think the yarn I used resulted in overwatering of the solo cups. Perhaps, a thinner yarn might have produced better results.

6) Depending on your soil mix, you might want to lighten it a little for the plants that are wicked.

7) Consider reducing the amount of fertilizer you put into your water as some of the water will evaporate, resulting in a higher level of fertilizer than you might want. And, of course, don't forget the Physan-20 if you want to avoid algae.

Closing Thoughts

Many people do not like community reservoirs as they can spread disease and insects quickly. Miraculously, I avoided this issue – although not through any great planning on my part. I'm pleased to say that I've had a lot of success with larger plants on individual reservoirs. Do I recommend wicking? Absolutely! When done correctly, it can save you lots of time and ensure your plants never have a culture break due to not getting watered when they should.

Why I Love the New species Classifications

By Candy Templeton

When the news first came out, I admit, I was upset. Only Six species! I looked at my collection in dismay. How can all of these lovely individuals disappear into obscurity? Now, I have heard that some think all species look alike. But if you are a collector of wild *Saintpaulia*, most likely you are looking at the plant as a whole. When I fuss over my plants, I admire the fuzzy leaves of one, or the smooth, round leaves of another. I delight in the different sizes and of plants and the lush diversity of leaves. Even the seemingly "all the same" light blue to deep purple flowers are amazingly different...you just need to know how to look at them.

Now I was looking at them and wondering how Darbyshire could lump them into only six! I am glad that I didn't toss out the name tags, because in the fall of last year the classification was adjusted by taxonomist James Smith. Now there are Nine species, and all the beloved and familiar names fell into subspecies categories under them. We can keep the names!

House of Amani, which previously was never declared a true species, is now listed as 5c. cl. House of Amani, which is a subspecies of *ionantha*, and it gets better! Take, for example, S. orbicularis var. purpurea. The full name under the new classification is S. *ionantha* subspecies *orbicularis* cl. *orbicularis var. purpurea*. Now that is a long name! But it can be abbreviated using the AVSA registration number, 5f. cl. *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*. Another example, S. *rupicola* becomes S. *rupicola* cl. *rupicola* or 8. cl. *rupicola*. I can definitely live with 8. cl. *rupicola* and 5f. cl. *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*. You can view the complete new list in the Nov/Dec 2008 AVSA magazine, pages 42 – 45. In closing, I would like to say, if you are not a species collector, please make room on your shelf for at least one of these wild beauties!

I want to thank Dr. Jeff Smith for showing me how to write the new classifications.

In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, The Indiana Academy

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Those members who grow the *Saintpaulia* species may wish to obtain a copy of the First Quarter, 2009 issue of "Gesneriads, The Journal for Gesneriad Growers" from The Gesneriad Society, Inc. This issue (Vol. 59, No. 1) is devoted to the African violet, genus *Saintpaulia* and there are several excellent articles. One is a review article of the genus by Laurence Skog and Jeanne Katzenstein. An article by James Smith describes in full his modifications of the Darbyshire taxonomic revision of the genus that has been adopted by the AVSA for the registration numbering system of the nine species and eight subspecies. Another article in the same issue by yours truly describes some of my experiences in hybridizing with the species. This issue is an excellent reference document and will be used by individuals for years to come. More articles and information on the species is planned for the second quarter issue of this publication due out later in the year.

Q: I am sending you a picture of a seedling that is showing random notches in the petals. Do you think this is a genetic trait?

A: Thanks to Janet Stromborg, hybridizer of the Allegro series for sending this picture and for permission to use it in the *African Violet Magazine*. The plant in question has shown this trait of random notches in the petal edges in several bloom cycles. Janet has leaves down, so it is too early to tell if the plant will propagate true to type and pass the three generation test. She also plans on hybridizing with the plant to see if this unusual trait can be passed on to offspring.

'Allegro, Running with Scissors'

I am speculating that the notches might be tied to the Geneva edges. Sometimes when the edges of the petals lose their ability to produce pigment (hence the white edge seen in Geneva edges), the cells also fail to grow properly. I've usually seen this expressed as thin edges or uneven edges. However, the deep notches seen in this seedling might be a more intense highly localized form of the same events.

Another possible explanation is that ruffles on petals are caused by the cells on the edges dividing too much. The extra cells have to go someplace and the resulting distortion causes the ruffling. If cells can divide too many times, perhaps they can also die and leave gaps, resulting in the notches seen in this plant.

If the trait proves stable and does become released to the public, the description of the plant will have to emphasize that these notches are natural to the flower and are not the result of damage. Janet has whimsically called the plant 'Allegro, Running with Scissors.' The name is too long to be approved, but it certainly gets the idea across.

Q: What would you suggest for hybridizing an African violet with "black" flowers?

A: In many other plants such as Tulips, Iris, and Dahlias, the color that seems closest to "black" is achieved by getting a high concentration of a red-violet pigment. In African violets, the closest color would be a dark coral red or a coral red/coral blue blend. Plants such as 'Fisher's Leone', 'Burnished Halo', and 'Mac's Black Jack' are examples of the colors that would be good places to start. Try crossing plants of these shades together to increase the intensity of the color and hopefully you'll get something close to "black".

Sometimes coral fantasy flowers will sport to a solid blue. This blue is the very rare coral blue shade which could be a valuable addition to your hybridizing goal. Crossing a coral blue with a dark coral red might also produce the coral red/coral blue blend and give you something close to "black". In either case, keep crossing the darkest colors you can find together to intensify the pigments.

One other possibility is to look for sports in plants such

as 'Mac's Just Jeff'. This plant has dark coral red flowers, sometimes with "black" fantasy spots. This plant may not be a fantasy in the classic sense, but it is possible that it could sport and produce flowers with the color of the black fantasy spots. You might try putting down a large number of leaves of this plant and see if you might get lucky with a sport in one of the offspring. Good Luck with your project. Many growers would welcome a "black" into the African violet color spectrum.

Q: Has hybridizing for "yellow" gotten any easier since 'Majesty' and 'His Promise' were introduced?

A: Most hybridizers will probably respond to this question with a qualified "Yes" and "No". Yes, it has become easier to work with the yellows since the first two hybrids came out because there are now many more yellow flowered hybrids to choose from and work with. No, it hasn't gotten easier because the yellows are still very frustrating in many ways. The amount of yellow in the flowers is still highly variable depending on the bloom cycle, growing conditions and other factors. Many of the plants will be white on one bloom cycle only to be intensively yellow the next. The yellow pigment still tends to be most concentrated in the center of the blooms and it is difficult to find plants that consistently cover the entire flower in a strong yellow hue. The yellow pigment itself seems to be less stable than other colors and the flowers often age quickly or show brown spots. Hybridizers have managed to improve the yellows over the years since their introduction, but the plants have not fulfilled the "promise" that many hoped would be developed for that color. All I can suggest is for you to keep trying.

Q: Why is it that so many of the green-flowered cultivars produced empty seed pods?

A: One of the difficulties in hybridizing with the green flowered plants is that they are often female sterile. The mutations that give them green petals often cause abnormal development or structure in the pistil. Many times the pistils will enlarge as the flowers age giving the impression that the pistil has been fertilized and that a fruit is developing. However, these "fruits" rarely mature and produce viable seed. Often the seed pods are empty as described by the person submitting the question.

Flower parts in plants are nothing more than modified leaves. When the petals retain the green chlorophyll of the leaves, the entire flower seems to be more "leaf-like" than usual. Under these conditions, the sexual parts of the flower, the stamens and pistil also seem to be more "leaf-like" too. This frequently makes them sterile and unable to reproduce.

Your best strategy with green flowers is to try using them as pollen parents rather than seed parents. It is more likely that the stamens will retain enough normalcy to produce enough viable pollen than the pistil will to produce seeds.

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PROPAGATING CHIMERAS

By Kerry Knight

Most African violet lovers have their favorite plants, and chimeras, pinwheel-like plants, are one of mine. The striped-blossomed sports can not be reproduced from a leaf cutting.

There are two ways to propagate chimeras, but be aware before you start that there is always a chance that the newly propagated plant can revert to a solid color.

The first method is by propagating from a sucker, if you are lucky enough to have your plant produce suckers. I usually let them develop a little before removing them, then place them into a small pot of moistened potting mix, and place into a zip lock bag or propagating box.

The other method is by propagating from a bloom stalk cutting. Remove the flower from the bloom stalk, just above the two little leaves, then trim the stalk to about 3cm (1.18") below the leaves, then place this cutting into a small pot containing moistened potting mix until the tiny leaves are just above the surface of the potting mix. Place the pot into a zip lock bag and wait for the baby plants to appear.

If you want to produce multiple suckers, the center of the plant can be removed. Pot this on as a crown cutting and the plant that is left will send up multiple suckers.

You may now understand why these plants are more expensive to purchase and harder to obtain.

From the Newsletter of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

TRUE AND FALSE

By Leonie Chirgwin

Many stories, old wives tales, myths, and legends have some truth, but have been distorted through the years. Other ideas and methods have been superseded by modern technology; for example, people with heart problems don't have to chew foxglove leaves any more, they take synthetically produced medicine. Many of the ideas about caring for plants have also been distorted or superseded in recent years.

We all know that our African violets require humidity and warmth, so it's often said, "Grow them in the bathroom." Bathrooms may have frosted glass windows for privacy, so the light is not the brightest, and really, a bathroom is only warm and humid for short times each day.

Most beginners are told by "a friend who knows" that they must not get water on the leaves of African violets. Heavens above - they are Rain Forest plants, and I don't think elephants rush around holding umbrellas over the plants in the wild when it rains, or when waterfall spray hits the plants. However, here's the grain of truth. Don't put plants back in bright light with droplets of water on the leaves, or the leaves will be marked.

Have you ever heard "You have to keep African violets wet - they come from rain forests in nature, so water them every week and keep water in their saucers." Actually, most African violets die of drowning. *They like to be just damp, not wet* - they are not bog plants! The grain of truth is that our plants enjoy humidity, so you can do a few things to add water to their growing area in your home, such as bowls of water among the plants. Of course, wick watering is the answer for heavy-handed waterers.

Experts tell us that if our plants don't flower they are not getting enough light. This doesn't mean you put them in direct sunlight with no protection. Break down sunlight with scrim curtains. If not enough light is a problem for you, find a spot to fit an artificial light growing area, however small. Growing under lights doesn't mean putting the plant on a coffee table six-feet under a ceiling light fitting. It means a situation, usually specially constructed, so the top of the plant is about 15 inches below the light source.

If your plant is sad, bedraggled, and has a long neck, an expert will ask, "When did you last repot this plant?" To do well, our plants need to be repotted in fresh potting mix at least twice a year. Every three months is better. Our African violets in the wild don't grow in soil, dirt, loam, sand, or clay. They grow in very shallow depressions on rocks, with a bit of moss and leaf rubbish. Clever, determined people over the years have tried various mixtures, so now we just have to follow their recipe of very light, porous mix in shallow pots or bowls and not garden dirt in 6" deep pots.

When propagating from a leaf, some people leave the leaf in water till roots develop and then plant them in soil. Some people say to coat the leaf petiole/stalk with honey and others say to coat them with rooting hormone. Some people propagate them in pure vermiculite. Again, we can benefit from the efforts of previous generations. African violet leaves will propagate quite successfully if put into a small amount of just damp correct potting mix and kept in a warm, well lit situation - no need to fuss.

Growers used to soak egg shells in water for days, then use this solution on plants in an old way of changing the pH of the potting mix. After doing a soil test, if you find the pH is too acidic, just make a weak solution of water and dolomite lime, and water with it.

Variegated plants are not sick, nor do they have a disease. They are the result of a natural mutation in the plant genes.

"My plants don't flower like the photos I see, so I'll give them extra fertilizer." Yes, our plants need to be fed - after all they are living things and all living things need food. However, enough is enough, and too much is fatal. If you are CONTINUOUSLY fertilizing via hand or wick watering, it is a good idea to use LESS than the product label recommends.

From the *Newsletter* of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

In Memory

Frank Senna

The Mid-Atlantic violet world mourns the death of Frank Senna in October, 2008. A member of the Tristate African Violet Council since 1981, he served as president from 1988 to 1992. Frank was an AVSA Advanced Judge who was active in the New Jersey Council of African Violet Judges, serving as president from 1996 to 2000. He judged affiliate shows throughout the area for many years.

On the local level, Frank was a long-time member of the AVS of North Jersey (formerly Clifton AVS), serving as both Vice president and President. Lately, he was a member of the Bergen County AVS. Frank exhibited in both the horticulture and design divisions of local, regional, and national shows. In the 1990 AVSA convention show in Boston, he won Best Design.

A Life Member of AVSA, Frank was elected a Director in 1991, and served on several AVSA committees. In 1993, he was convention chair for the AVSA convention in Lancaster, PA. He will be greatly missed by his many violet friends.

Remembering Alice Grundy

By Barbara Stewart

Alice Grundy was a member of AVSA and the Richmond African Violet Society (RAVS) since the early 1970's. Alice was an avid grower of African violets who attended shows regularly. Her devotion to the club was second to none. She served numerous terms as treasurer, chaired many committees, and shared her expertise as an AVSA Senior Judge.

Alice stated that violets were her life for many years. She consistently won RAVS best-in-show awards, and demonstrated great talent in design. Being quite competitive and able to grow any plant well, she entered many regional and national shows. Her proudest moment came in 1995 when she won best in show at the AVSA convention in Kansas City, with her beautiful 'Tiny Wood Trail.'

Alice's last official club position in RAVS was AVSA Representative. She tirelessly promoted AVSA membership, while recruiting and retaining local club members. She set the bar high in growing and showing her violets, and inspired us to grow more beautiful plants and create more artistic designs. Her years of service and dedication to the Richmond African Violet Society have helped make it the strong and active club it is today, and she will be remembered and missed by friends everywhere.

Darlene Shillinglaw

Darlene Shillinglaw passed away in January, 2009. She was a long-time member of the Wisconsin State Council of AV Clubs, having helped with the National AVSA convention in Milwaukee in 1983.

She was also a member of Crosstown AVC of Madison, WI, until thirteen years ago when she helped start the evening Sundowners AVC and was the first President.

In 1998 she became Ways & Means chairman of the Wisconsin Council of AV Clubs, remaining so until her passing. She often put together the club's beautiful education displays. She was known for growing beautiful *Streptocarpus*.

Darlene was dependable, kind, very thoughtful, and always willing to help out where needed.

In 2008 she was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for her years of dedicated work towards a greater organization.

She will be greatly missed by all her African violet friends and family.

Remembering Wayne Coley

By Barbara Stewart

Wayne was a devoted grower of African violets for most of his life. Twenty five years ago, he joined the Richmond African Violet Society. He remained actively involved with the club throughout the years, serving as First Vice President, then President, and finally as club Historian. As a Baptist minister, he served as Devotional chairman, opening each meeting and club luncheon with words of inspiration. He also promoted the club and its shows as Publicity chairman, and served the Mid Atlantic African Violet Society as Affiliate representative.

Wayne started growing African violets by collecting the Optimaras that were named for the 50 states. As his hobby expanded, he particularly enjoyed growing variegated plants. Wayne also ventured into design with terrariums, underwater designs, and miniature arrangements, which were his favorite.

As a member of AVSA, MAAVS, and Dixie AVS, Wayne was well known by many in the violet world. He inspired and touched the lives of everyone who knew him. His warm, friendly personality, his optimism, and his sense of humor will be greatly missed by all of us.

Remembering Alice Easter "Always a Lady"

AVSA lost a long-time friend and member on Jan. 28, 2009 with the death of Alice Easter. Born in Philadelphia on Dec. 20, 1920, she lived there most of her life, moving to Montgomery County, PA ten years ago. Alice was married twice and is survived by two children, several grandchildren, and many she called "greatgrans".

Alice was a member of the African Violet Society of Philadelphia for many years, served as president from 1980 to 1982, and as AVSA representative since. Every year when that group participated in the renowned Philadelphia Flower Show, Alice would help meet the public and answer their questions about violets. Ms. Easter always took time out to guide and educate new members, teaching rookies the finer points of proper grooming and plant maintenance. Underwater displays were her specialty, with water so clean it looked like glass. She was also an AVSA judge until recently and was a member of the NJ Council of African Violet Judges for several years. A frequent attendee at AVSA conventions, Alice volunteered to help at the AVSA sales table and/or registration, and was one of the annual auction "helpers". From 1999 to 2002, she served as a director on the AVSA Board of Directors.

Violets were not Alice's only interest. She loved all plants, grew several gesneriads, taught classes at the YMCA, and judged city gardens for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Her other passion was dolls. She had a beautiful collection of dolls of all sizes, many of which she made or dressed herself. She won awards with them and was the subject of newspaper articles.

Recently, Alice became a member of the Red Hat Society and served a term as the "Queen Bee". She volunteered at a local senior center where she managed their gift shop and kept in touch with shut-in members. With her warm, friendly manner, she will be greatly missed by family, friends, and neighbors. Convention will not be quite the same without Alice. Fortunately, we have fond memories to comfort us. Who could ever forget Alice smiling, wearing her HUGE African violet hat!

Mini Sinningias

By Kim Thorogood

The tuber of a mini-sinningia looks a bit like a potato and has a slight protuberance at the top. It can be thought of as a thickened root, with finer rootlets growing from it. The purpose of a tuber is water storage during the dry season. During that time, the green parts of the plant die down to the ground. Moisture is preserved in the tuber through a period of nearly complete inactivity called dormancy. Any untimely moisture invariably causes the tuber to rot. When the dry period nears its end, the tuber puts up a sprout whether it is moistened or not. If the rainy season is late, the sprout will cease to grow until the rain comes.

All sinningias go into dormancy. If the temperature is constant, such as when you are growing them inside, it may affect the dormancy period, and you will find the plant doesn't die down. When dormancy is imminent, the foliage will become withered looking, and you can trim the stem back to approximately 1cm (1/3") above the surface of the potting mix. Withhold water from the pot and store in a cool, dry area.

Apart from the dormancy aspect, the culture of mini-sinningias is not that different from that of African violets. They can be planted in the same potting-mix as African violets. The only difference is that there is a tuber instead of fibrous roots. The tuber needs to be planted just below the surface of the soil (right side up). Mini-sinningias don't like to be over-potted. They can be grown using the standard wick-watering method with the same fertilizers as for violets.

They like warmth (between 20 - 25°C) (68 - 77 degrees F.) and humidity (around 70-75%), and letting plants dry out can affect the foliage; it curls under and won't flatten out again. If your house is particularly cold, you may need to create a terrarium atmosphere for the plants. They don't like drafts, either. My plants are growing on the top shelf of a 3-tier light stand in a room that maintains a fairly even temperature (with a bit of help from the heater).

Propagation of miniature sinningias is quite easy. Species sinningias will self-seed, and in the case of *S. pusilla,* profusely. You can take tip cuttings, but leave one tip on the plant to grow on. When you plant the cutting (or even if you have left it in water for an extended period) a tuber will form at the base of the stem. Leaves can also be planted as for African violets. A tuber will form at the base of the petiole, the leaf will die, and then the tuber can be potted up.

Keep an eye on the show table. Now that mini-sinningias are becoming more popular, there are usually a few on show. They are beautiful little plants, and once you master their cultural requirements, you will be rewarded with a winner.

From the *Newsletter* of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

Hybridizing Gesneriads for Beginners (and others)

Part I

By Ron Myhr
Illustrated by Ann Hoffingworth

WHAT IS HYBRIDIZING?

Strictly speaking, hybridizing is the creation, through sexual propagation, of new varieties of plants. This may be done by crossing two different species (naturally occurring varieties) or by crossing hybrids with each other or with species. When we cross a plant with itself, we are said to be "selfing" it. When we "self" a hybrid we are, generally speaking, creating new varieties, so this is considered hybridizing. When we self a species, we are in most cases only setting seed, not hybridizing, as no new variety is being produced.

WHY HYBRIDIZE?

Many people are of the impression that hybridizing is something best done by experts, that it is a difficult or time-consuming endeavor beyond the average person's competence. This is not true. Anyone may engage in hybridizing with relatively little difficulty, and be handsomely rewarded with an excessive amount of interesting plants, some of which may actually prove to be improvements on commercial varieties. In fact, the only problem most of us are likely to encounter is a gross oversupply of seedlings. These can always be given away, thus ensuring a continuing supply of friends.

It is true that some hybridizing projects may be of a complexity sufficient to discourage most amateurs and that some varieties may be particularly difficult to work with. However, the range of projects available to us is sufficient to keep even the least skilled amateur growing for several lifetimes.

THE SEXUAL ANATOMY OF FLOWERS

Before one begins to hybridize, it is necessary to acquire some understanding of the reproductive process of plants. We all know that gesneriads may be propagated in a variety of ways - by stem or leaf cuttings, rhizomes, tubers, seeds, etc.

All methods of reproduction, except for seeds, are known collectively as asexual or vegetative propagation. A new variety is not being created when these methods are used - the resulting plant will be identical to the parent, except in those exceptionally rare instances where a genetic mutation occurs. In asexual propagation we are creating a clone of the original plant.

Sexual propagation occurs when genes from two courses are combined to produce a unique (one-of-a-kind) individual. In humans, as in all higher animals, the two sources of genes will normally be two different individuals - single individuals never produce both male and female packages of genes (gametes). While many plants such as *Cannabis sp.* (marijuana), produce separate male and female individuals, gesneriads are *perfect* or *hermaphroditic* - each flower normally produces both male and female gametes. In other words, the two sources of genes necessary for sexual propagation may come from the same plant, even the same flower.

Examine a largish, mature gesneriad flower, such as one from a *Sinningia speciosa* or *Streptocarpus* hybrid. (Fig. 1). Look into the flower. Note the parts projecting forward from the base of the *corolla*. These are the sexual organs of the plant. The pistil is the female organ. The top of the pistil is called the stigma, and in a mature flower (as opposed to a flower that has just opened), it has an open appearance and seems to be moist or sticky. (Fig. 2). It actually is somewhat sticky, a means of facilitating the adherence of grains of *pollen*.

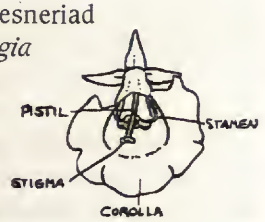
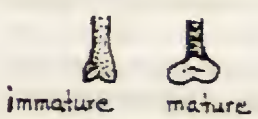


Fig. 1



The male organs, the *stamens*, produce the pollen. (Fig. 3). Most gesneriads have four stamens, although some, such as *Streptocarpus*, have only two, and advanced hybrids such as those of *Sinningia speciosa* may have several. At the top of each stamen is an *anther*. It is the anther that actually produces the pollen.

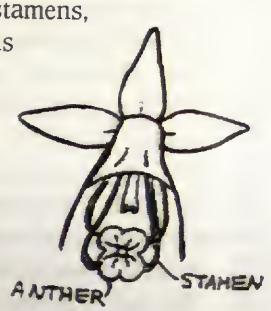


Fig. 3

In most gesneriads, the anthers are joined in pairs, or all four together. Manipulating

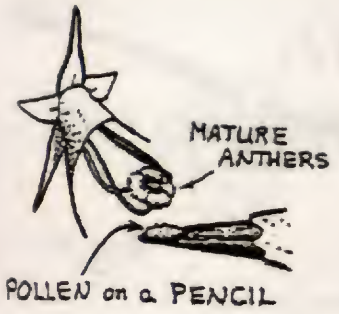


Fig. 4

the anthers with the tip of a pencil will often result in the release of small quantities of pollen. (Fig. 4). In some gesneriads, such as *Saintpaulia* species and hybrids, the pollen is enclosed in sacs, which must be cut or forced open. Careful examination and casual experimentation will instruct an investigator in the sexual circumstances of any particular gesneriad.

Pull the corolla away from the bloom stalk, or examine the stalk where a flower has fallen off of its own accord. (Fig. 5) Note that the anthers are attached to the corolla and have pulled away with it. The pistil remains attached to the stalk. At the bottom of the pistil is the ovary. In some gesneriads, such as sinningias, the ovary is a round or oval structure well imbedded in the leafy calyx at the top of the flower stalk. In others, such as *Streptocarpus*, the ovary is the beginning of a long green pod. Within the ovary are the female gametes.

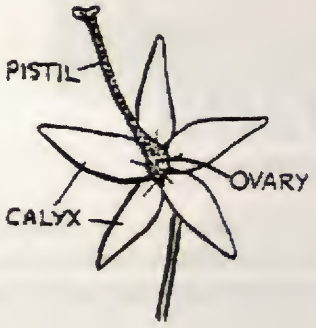


Fig. 5

Individual pollen grains are the male gametes. When pollen lands on the stigma, each grain grows a tube down through the pistil to the ovary. The genetic material travels down this tube and unites with individual female gametes, resulting in immature seed (zygotes). During ripening, the ovary expands to accommodate the seed development, resulting in a seedpod of one sort or another. At maturity, the seedpod (or berry, or capsule) will often split open, allowing the seeds to be effectively distributed.

SELFING A GESNERIAD

Fertilizing a flower with pollen taken from the same flower or from another flower on the same plant is known as "selfing". This is generally a very simple operation, requiring only the transfer of pollen from the anthers to the stigma. Since individual pollen grains are microscopic in size, a very small amount of pollen may result in a very large number of seeds.

The varieties of plants, which grow in the wild, are known as species. When compared with hybrids, plants of the same species exhibit relatively little variation from plant to plant. However, some genetic variation always exists in species.

Consequently, no two male or female gametes will contain exactly the same package of genes. Some variation, in greater or lesser degree, will therefore occur in plants grown from seeds of a "selfed" species. It is worthwhile to self species as a means of identifying variable characteristics and selecting particularly worthwhile clones for hybridizing. While the variations between seedlings will generally be small, they are sometimes quite dramatic. For instance, I managed with some difficulty to self *Pearcea hypocyrtifolia*, which has odd flowers of a brilliant red, and chocolaty, silver-veined quilted foliage in the commercially available plants. However, about a third of the plants that I grew from the selfed seed had plain bright green foliage.

In most hybrids the situation is quite different. Genes from a number of species have been used to produce the hybrid, and consequently the packages of genes in each male or female zygote will usually vary considerably. Thus, considerable variation will often occur in the seedlings that are a product of a selfing. Less variation will occur if the parent plant is part of a line of breeding calculated to produce plants with certain specific characteristics.

For instance, *Streptocarpus* of the "Weismoor Hybrids" strain will, when selfed, almost always produce plants with large, vigorous leaves and large, shapely, often ruffled, flowers. Seedlings of a selfing will, however, vary in color, while generally tending toward the color of the parent (e.g. those from a red flower will produce more reds than those from a purple flower). Advanced hybrids are usually inbred in this way. That is, they have been selected over several generations for uniformity in the production of certain characteristics. Distinct strains may even be produced within one species, as in *Sinningia speciosa*, where there are large-flowered strains, multiflora strains, slipper strains, double strains, and various others. Selfing of plants within such a strain will yield progeny similar to the parent.

CROSSING GESNERIADS

It often happens that we wish to combine the characteristics of two or more plants in our hybridizing. We might, for instance, have a large-flowered white *Streptocarpus* of an undesirable shape, and another with smaller white flowers of a perfect shape. These could be crossed in the hope of producing a large-flowered white of improved appearance. This can be accomplished by transferring pollen from an anther of one plant (the pollen parent) to the pistil of the other (the seed parent).

Care must be taken to ensure that pollen from the seed parent's anthers is not accidentally deposited on the pistil before, during, or after this operation. It is usually desirable, therefore, to carefully remove the anthers from the seed parent's flower, to avoid self-fertilization. This is best done before the stigma reaches maturity. We may perform crosses of this sort to improve or explore flower shape, color, size, markings or floriferousness, or vegetative characteristics such

as plant size, leaf shape, or color, or other aspects of habit.

RECORD KEEPING

Whenever a cross or selfing is done, it is important to record in some way just what you have done, and to label the fertilized flower appropriately. I find it convenient to combine these functions. I cut three cm. (1.18 inches) lengths of the plastic stakes I use in each pot, and punch a hole in one end with a hole-punch.

A cut from the near end is made to the hole. The crossing information may then be written on the little label, and the label attached to the bloom stalk by spreading the cut so the stalk can be inserted in the hole. (Fig. 6) You may be a more rigorous record-keeper than me, and wish to record more information about the cross, your reasons for making it, and the results. In this case, it might be wise to number each cross and to keep a notebook with a page for each number, on which you can record all relevant data. The number would then be the only information needed on the label.

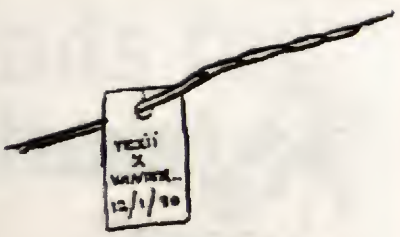


Fig. 6

Part II of this article will appear in the July/August '09 African Violet Magazine

This article first appeared in the Toronto Gesneriad Society Newsletter in two parts - Vol. 5, No. 2, Vol. 5, No. 3; February and March, 1981.

FERTILIZING

By Heather Harkness

Fertilizing your African violets with a well-balanced fertilizer is essential for growing beautiful plants and especially so if you wish to show them. Application of a fertilizer specially formulated for African violets is necessary for healthy roots, leaves, and the production of flowers.

The labels on the product usually show the ratio of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). A suitable ratio for African violets is one where the N:P:K ratio is roughly equal, with the Phosphorus being slightly higher. Nitrogen is important in the development of leaf color, leaf and petiole growth, quality of plant tissue, as well as contributing to rapid growth and increased protein content of plants. Phosphorus is required for stimulating early root formation and growth, giving plants a strong start, hastening maturity, and importantly, stimulating the production of flowers. Potassium is important for vitality and resistance to disease, improvement of reproductive quality, and is necessary for the formation and transfer of starches and sugars to the plant system.

A good, well-balanced fertilizer should also contain trace elements such as zinc, copper, chlorine, manganese, iron, boron, and molybdenum. Secondary elements, sulphur, calcium, and magnesium are usually found in sufficient quantities in the soil mix. The free elements of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen are found in the air and water.

When rooting leaves and establishing young plants, it is beneficial to use a nitrogen-based fertilizer to get them well started. At this stage, you are not concerned so much about flower production. Fish emulsion is high in nitrogen but has a strong smell which is not welcome in the lounge room! It is also unsuitable for wick watering because the solids can settle on the bottom of the reservoir and clog up the wick. A soluble chemical fertilizer will provide better absorption. The use of slow-release fertilizers mixed into the soil have the disadvantage of being unable to be extracted when fertilizing needs to be reduced at certain unfavorable times of the year. Fertilizing should be reduced or even stopped if the growth of plants has slowed because of winter cold or summer heat.

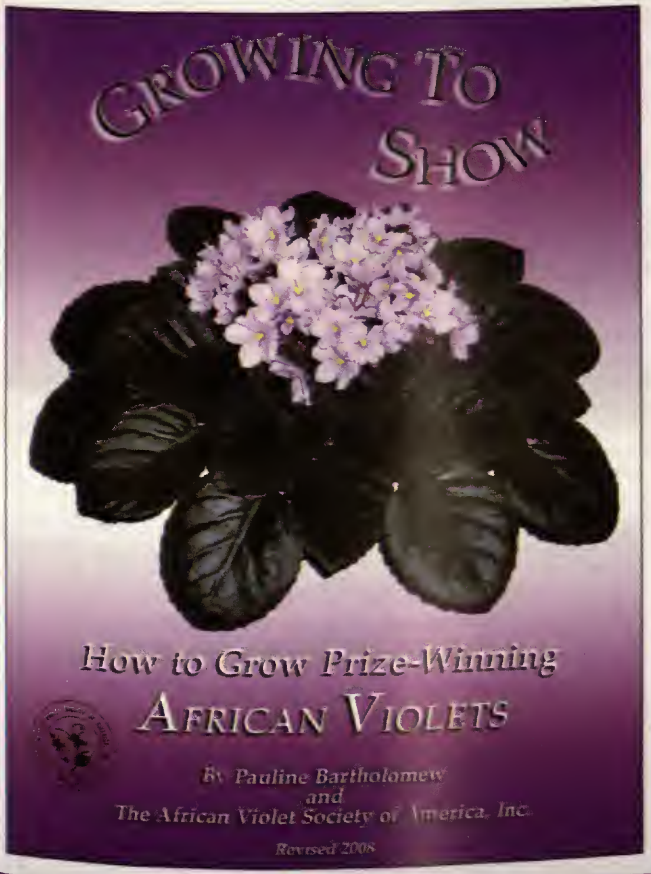
When plants are on the wick watering or "Texas-style" systems, the fertilizer solution needs to be weaker as the plant is continually drawing up nutrients. African violets flourish when on a regular feeding program. The recommended concentration of solid chemical fertilizers is of 1/8 teaspoon per 2 liters of tepid water. Wick-watering reservoirs can be filled with solution; Texas-Style containers filled with about 1/4 inch of liquid. If top-watering, use the same amount of fertilizer in the water but do not apply to dry potting mix. Moisten the mix with plain water and fertilize later in the day. While plain foliage varieties can tolerate a higher nitrogen content fertilizer, variegated foliage plants require less nitrogen in order to encourage the variegation and prevent an undesirable amount of green developing in the leaves. Bloom booster fertilizers may be used to bring on a full head of flowers for a show. These products are low in nitrogen and higher in phosphorus.

From the *Newsletter* of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

AVSA's 2010 Calendar

The perfect gift for lovers of African Violets!

US	$13.95
Canada	$15.95
Other International	$17.95



New and Improved

Growing to Show

Available from the AVSA Office

$16.00

MINIATURE AFRICAN VIOLETS

By Sue Gardner

Have you wondered where miniature African violets come from? They were hybridized from the smaller species. Lyndon Lyon used *S. grotei, S. magungensis, S. nitida, S. orbicularis,* and *S. shumensis* to breed some early minis. Now, however, we have a range of minis almost as great as standard plants.

We have mini and semi-mini trailers as well as mini and semi-mini single crown plants. Minis have a maximum diameter of 15cm (6") and semiminis a maximum of 20cm (8"). The quantity of bloom should be in proportion to the size of the plant.

Minis come in great variety. There are light and dark green or variegated leaves, tailored and wavy foliage, and all the usual flower colors, including fantasies.

Minis are great for people with little growing space, and they grow well in natural light.

CULTURE

Minis should be grown closer to light than standard plants. Place you minis on a brightly lit windowsill, and they will thrive. If you grow under lights, place your plants under the lights between 12 - 18cm (5 - 7") from the tubes. Light times are the same as for standard plants.

The minis require good air circulation, moderate temperatures, and humidity between 40 - 60 percent, just as standard plants do.

Use ordinary African violet potting mix and use no larger than 7cm (3") pots. Re-pot more often than standard plants, as the potting mix is in small quantity and fertilizer salts can build up easily. It also means you can avoid developing a long neck. Re-potting a little more often keeps the potting mix fresh.

Fertilizer should be a little more diluted than for standard plants. Dilute the standard solution up to about half.

Propagate minis from a leaf in the usual way.

PROBLEMS

Minis need to grow directly under lights to avoid crooked growth. If you grow on a windowsill, turn the plants regularly. The latest minis are not as prone to this problem as older varieties.

Suckering may be a problem with older varieties, but this can be avoided by increasing the amount of light received by the plant.

MINIATURIZING THE MINIS

Start with a plantlet and pot into a thumb pot. Never pot into anything larger.

Re-pot every two months, and trim the root ball to fit the pot.

Only allow three rows of leaves.

Because the pot contains so little potting mix, be careful not to allow it to dry out.

The plants need plenty of light to flower successfully.

Use a wick and reservoir for best results.

From the *Newsletter* of the
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

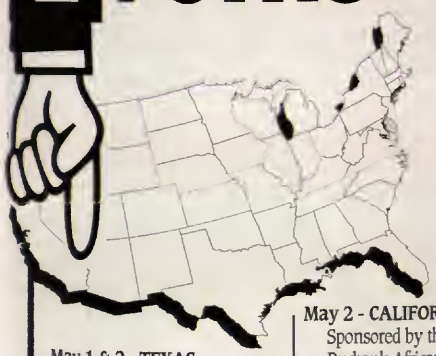
African Violets From Leaf Cuttings

By Nancy Manozzi

1. In a clear plastic food container with an attached lid, place about 1/2"-1" (1.27 - 2.5 cm) of moistened perlite. Then, place a 1/2" (1.27cm) layer of slightly moistened potting soil on top of the perlite layer. If you decide to use individual pots, 2 1/4" or 2 1/2" (5.7 - 6.35 cm) pots are the right size.
2. Prepare the "mother" leaf. Using a sharp knife or a straight edge razor blade, cut the stem on a diagonal about 1/2"-1" from the base of the leaf. Angle the cut from front to back. You should use a leaf from the middle row as that will be strong and healthy.
3. Place the mother leaf in the soil almost up to the base of the leaf. Lightly pack the soil around the leaf stem to hold it in place.
4. Be patient. Tiny new leaves will begin to appear near the base of the parent leaf anytime from 6 weeks to 6 months. When the baby plantlet's leaves are about the size of a dime, they are ready to be separated from the mother leaf.
5. Remove the entire clump from the pot. Separate the plantlets from the base of the mother leaf by gently pulling them apart. Keep as much of the root system as possible with the new plantlet(s).
6. Pot the new plantlets. Plant each baby plant or "starter plant" in its own pot using a very light, porous potting mix. Don't forget to label the pot with the plant's name. Water with a weak fertilizer solution and place the plant in either a plastic covered container or a plastic bag for about a week. Give it good light and keep it warm.

From *Ye Bay Stater*,
publication of the Bay State AVS

Coming Events



May 1 & 2 - TEXAS
Magic Knight AVS of San Antonio Annual Judged Show/Sale
Live Oak Civic Center
8101 Pat Booker Rd.
Live Oak, TX
May 1 - 2pm - 4:30pm
May 2 - 8:30am - 4:30pm
Info: Irene Harney
(210) 684-3598
Email: viharney@sbcglobal.net

May 1 – 3 - PENNSYLVANIA
Springfield AVS Show/Sale
Springfield Mall
Baltimore Pike & Sproul Rd.
Springfield, PA
May 1 – 6pm – 10pm
May 2 – 1pm – 10pm
May 3 – Noon – 6pm
Info: Brenda Nyce
(610) 864-3392
Email: three58@msn.com

May 2 - CANADA
Vancouver AV & Gesneriad Society Show/Sale
Van Dusen Botanical Garden
5251 Oak Street
Vancouver, BC, Canada
Hours: 1pm – 4pm
Info: Arleen Dewell
(604) 254-8975
Email: arleendewell@shaw.ca

May 2 - CALIFORNIA
Sponsored by the Montrose and Burbank African Violet Societies
Judged Show/Sale
Descanso Gardens
Van de Kamp Hall
1418 Descanso Drive
La Canada Flintridge, CA
Sale: 9:00am to 4:30pm
Show: 12:00pm to 4:30pm
Info: Vicki Ringer
(818) 884-0537
VickiRinger@aol.com

May 2 & 3 - OHIO
Cincinnati AVS Annual Judged Show and Sale
Eastgate Mall
Ohio State
Route 32 and Interstate 275
Cincinnati, Ohio
May 2 - 12 noon - 9 pm
May 3 - 12 noon - 5 pm
Info: Al Cenci (513)- 831-3692
Email: acenci@cinci.rr.com

May 2 & 3 - NEW YORK
AV & Gesneriad Society of Western New York Judged Show/Sale
Walden Galleria Mall
Galleria Drive
Cheektowaga, NY
May 2 – 11am - 9pm
May 3 – 10am - 5pm
Info: Paul Kroll
(716) 652-8658
Email: pfkroll@roadrunner.com

May 2 & 3 - NEW YORK
AVS of Syracuse Show/Sale
Beaver Lake Nature Center
8477 East Mud Lake Rd.
Baldwinsville, NY
May 2 - 1pm – 6pm
May 3 – 10am – 4:30pm
Info: Kathy Garbarino
Email: kgarb@twcny.rr.com

May 2 & 3 - NEW JERSEY
Garden State AVC Show/Sale
Mercer County
Community College
1200 Old Trenton Rd.
West Windsor, NJ
May 2 –Noon – 6pm
May 3 – 9am – 4pm
Info: Jessica Bryant
(609) 223-0441
Email: j.l.bryant@hotmail.com

May 2 & 3 - WISCONSIN
Oshkosh Violet Society 29th Annual Judged Show/Sale
St. Jude the Apostle Church
(formerly St. Heart Church)
Corner of 5th Ave. & Knapp St.
Oshkosh, WI
May 2 - 10:00am - 4:30pm
May 3 - 11:30am - 3:00pm
Info: Kevin Degner
(920)426-3764
E-mail: kevin_degner@sbcglobal.net

May 2 & 3 - VIRGINIA
Tidewater African Violet Society
26th Annual Judged Show/Sale
Free Parking & Admission
St. John's Lutheran Church
8919 Tidewater Drive
Norfolk, VA
May 2 - Plant Sale
9am - 5pm/Show 1pm - 5pm
May 3 – Sale/Show
12:00pm - 5pm
Info: Brenda Taylor
(757) 816-5517
Email: hydrafly@cox.net

May 2 & 3 - CONNECTICUT
Silvermine African Violet Society
Judged Show/Sale
May 2 - 1 to 5pm
May 3 - 12-4 pm
Earthplace
10 Woodside Lane
Westport CT
Directions: www.earthplace.org
Free admission, raffle

May 2 & 3 - ILLINOIS
Glenview/North Shore AVS Sale/Display
Educational Exhibit
Chicago Botanic Harden
Glenco, Il
Hours: 10am - 4:30pm
Info: Barbara Goodsell
(847) 729-1690

May 2 & 3 - CONNECTICUT
Naugatonic AVS Annual Judged Show/Sale
Homewood Suites Hotel
6905 Main St.
Stratford, CT
May 2 - 1pm - 4pm
May 3 - 10am - 3pm
Info: (860) 283-5311

May 2 & 3 - IOWA
The Evening AVC of Des Moines Show/Sale
Merle Hay Mall
3800 Merle Hay Rd.
Des Moines, IA
May 2 - Noon - 9pm
May 3 - Noon - 4pm
Info: Ruth Coleman
Email: recoleman@wildblue.net

May 8 & 9 - OHIO
Parmatown AVS Show/Sale
Parmatown Mall
7441 W. Ridgewood Dr.
Parma, OH
May 8 - 12:30pm - 9pm
May 9 - 9am - 6pm
Info: Pat Schreiber
(440) 884-1958
Email: patschreiber@earthlink.net

May 8 & 9 - OHIO
African Violet Society of Dayton Show/Sale
Town and Country Shopping Center
Corner of Stroop and
Far Hills (OH-48)
Kettering, OH
May 8 - Noon - 9:00pm
May 9 - 10:00am - 4:00pm
Info: Jan Schroeder
(937) 233-0974
Email: jmschroeder22@aol.com

May 8 & 9 - MARYLAND
Baltimore African Violet Club
Judged Show/Sale
Harford Mall
Bel Air Road,
Bel Air, MD
Both Days 10am-9:30pm
Show opens at 1pm on the 8th
Info: Karen Foster
(410-457-4434)
Email: fancypos194@aol.com

May 9 -Wisconsin
Sundowners AVC & Crosstown AVC
Annual Spring Sale
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI
Hours: 9am - 3pm
Info: Alice Peterson
(608) 833-5552
Email: peters56@tds.net

May 9 - OREGON
Portlandia Violet Club
Display/Sale
Jantzen Beach Mall
Portland, OR
Hours: 10am – 8pm
Info: Blanche Bunker
(503) 761-7861

May 9 & 10 - FLORIDA
Heart of Jacksonville AVS
Display/Sale
Carriage Club
Retirement Center
9601 Southbrook Dr
Jacksonville, FL
May 9 - 9am - 7pm
May 10 - 9am - 4pm
Info: Paige Hayes
(904) 733-2364
Email: chixenbaugh@gmail.com

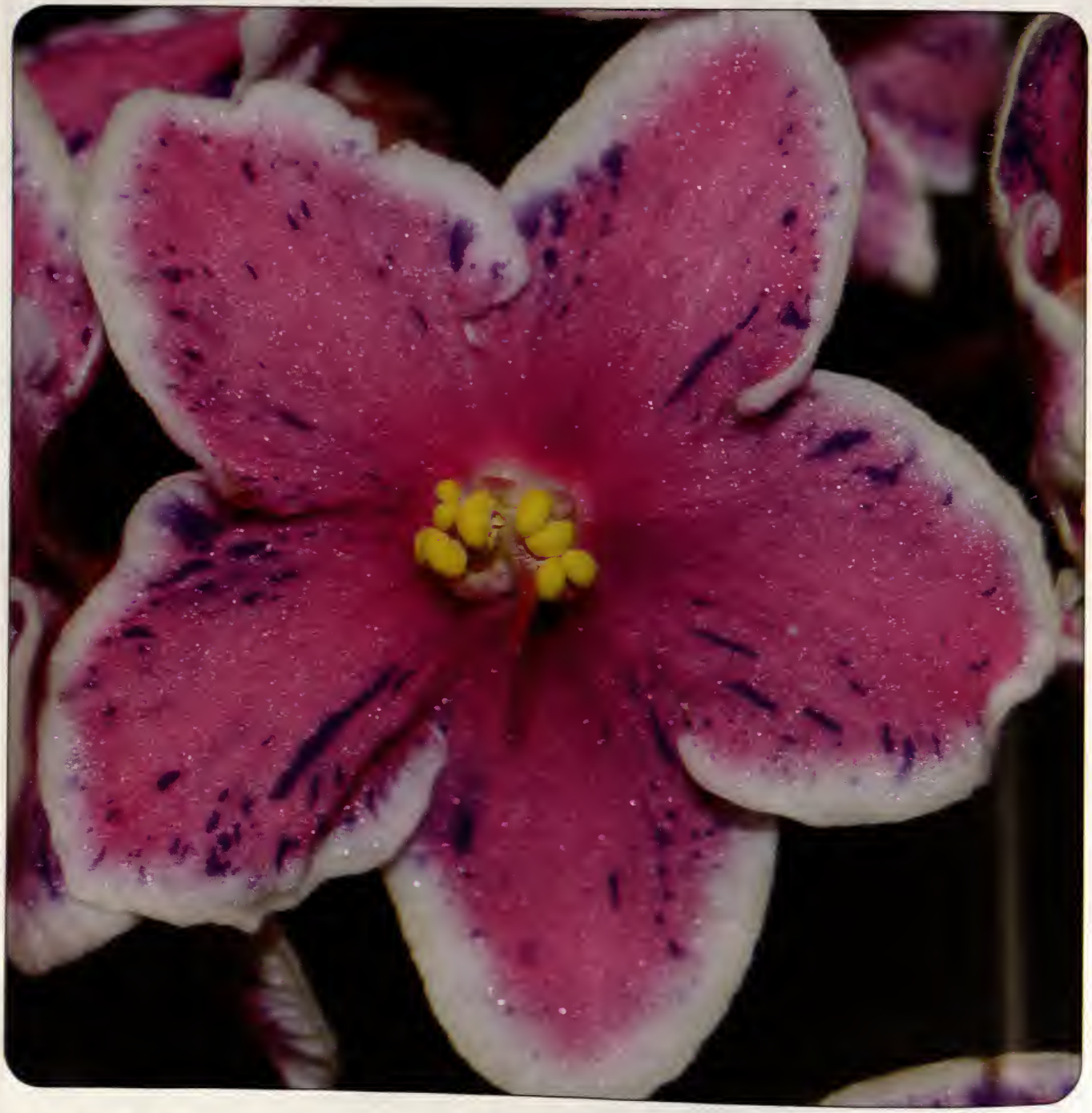
May 9 & 10 - FLORIDA
Violet Patch of South Florida
Show/Sale
Flamingo Gardens
3750 S Flamingo Road
Davie, FL
Both Days: 9:30am - 4:30pm
Info: (754) 321-2110 or
(954) 288-1154

May 14 & 15 - Tennessee
Dixie AVS Convention
1400 Market St.
Chattanooga, TN
May 14 – 1pm – 5pm
May 15 – 10:30am – 4pm
Info: Monica Litman
(423) 584-5888
mlitman@charter.net

May 16 - NEW JERSEY
AVC of Burlington County
Judged Show/Sale
Medford Leas
Retirement Community
1 Medford Leas Way
Medford, NJ
Hours: 11am - 5pm
Info: Blanche Renz
(609) 758-1138
Email: bfrenz2000@yahoo.com

May 16 - New Jersey
The African Violet Club of Burlington County
Annual Judged Show /Sale
Medford Leas
Retirement Community
1 Medford Leas Way
Medford, NJ
Hours: 11:00am - 5:00pm
Info: Blanche Renz
(609)758-1138

New Rebel Hybrids from Ruth Bann



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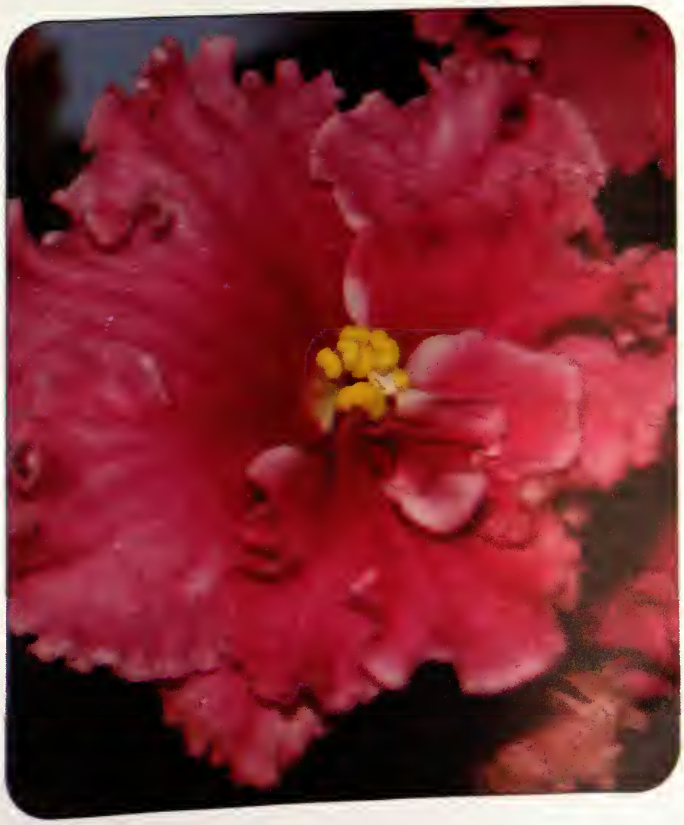
Standard



Rebel's Happy Face

Standard

2009 VACATION GUIDE

Whether taking a vacation, traveling on business, or day tripping to the country, consider stopping to visit AVSA Commercial members listed below. There are several changes of telephone numbers, addresses, and other information. Many of the growers have a wide selection of other gesneriads and houseplants. Please note that several growers are available by appointment only. Please make the necessary arrangements in advance of your visit.

The list of growers is laid out as though you were driving from New York southward. Then the growers are listed in a zigzag manner up and down and across the country, winding up in California and then back to Canada where our Canadian friends are eager to see you. Drive safely, stay well, and enjoy your trip. If you cannot travel this year, be sure to look at some of the beautiful Internet sites listed.

Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses, Inc.
Paul Sorano
14 Mutchler St.
PO Box 249, Dolgeville, NY 13329
315-429-8291
E-mail: info@lyndonlyon.com
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM (Mon – Fri)
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM (Sat)
Noon – 4:00 PM
(Sundays May and June only)
African violets, gesneriads. Located just ten minutes off I-90 in the foothills of the Adirondack Mtns.
www.lyndonlyon.com

Violet Venture
Fay Wagman
52 Harper Drive
Pittsford, NY 14534
585-381-6384
E-mail: FayW@aol.com
Call ahead, please.
African violets and other gesneriads.
www.violetventure.com

The Violet Barn
Ralph and Olive Ma Robinson
7209 County Rd. 12 (PO Box 9)
Naples, NY 14512
585-374-8592
E-mail: robsviolet@aol.com
Noon – 5:00 PM Tuesday through Saturday. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.
African violets, other gesneriads; indoor tropical houseplants.
www.violetbarn.com

Violet Gallery
Mahlen and Brenda Petry
1590 Cranberry Rd.
York Springs, PA 17372
717-528-8268
E-mail: mpetry@embarqmail.com
Hours by appointment.
2000+ African violet varieties. Large selection of standards, semiminiatures, miniatures, trailers, species, wasps and vintage. Oyama pots, soil, fertilizer and insecticide.
www.violetgallery.com

Bluebird Greenhouse
Libbie and Tom Glembocki
4821 Jessie Rd.
Apex, NC 27539
919-362-0530
E-mail: libbie@bluebirdgreenhouse.com
Open 9-12 weekdays or by appointment.
African violets, gesneriads, orchids, growing supplies.
www.bluebirdgreenhouse.com

Travis' Violets
Travis Davis
2064 Ellen St.
Ochlocknee, GA 31773
229-574-5167 (day) or
229-574-5236 (night)
E-mail: travisviolets@aol.com
9 – 5 (Mon – Sat) with appointment.
African violets.
www.travisviolets.com

Mrs. Strep Streps
Kathy Spissman
4086 Brownlee Drive
Tucker, GA 30084 (just outside Atlanta)
770-939-5289
E-mail: mrsstrepstreps@comcast.net
Please call for an appointment.
Streptocarpus, chiritas and other gesneriads.

Cedar Creek Violets
David and Nancy Rollins
30 South Loop Drive
Stanford, KY 40484
606-282-3432
E-mail: drollins@adelphia.net
10:00 AM – 6:00 PM (Mon – Sat)
African violets, chiritas, episcias, columneas, and supplies.
www.orderafricanviolets.com

Arcadia GlassHouse
Jeff Kenyon
20 Park Road
Painesville, OH 44077
440-357-0022
E-mail:
jvencius@ArcadiaGlassHouse.com
M-F 9-5
Sat and Sun by appt.
Lights, "Wick-Mix", wicks & saucers, perlite, vermiculite, Urea-Free Fertilizer, Oyama pots and much more! We specialize in custom built greenhouses at affordable prices!
www.VioletSupply.com

Buckeye Violets
Pat Hancock
7132 Shurz Rd.
Midd, Ohio 45042
513-425-0308
Call ahead for appointment.
African violet plants and leaves, soil, fertilizer.
www.BuckeyeViolets.com

Belisle's
Marcia Belisle
4041 N. Metnik Rd.
Ojibwa, WI 54862
715-945-2687
By appointment only.
Violets, episcias, streps, and other gesneriads. Ferns, begonias, and other indoor plants.
www.belislesviolethouse.com

Kent's Flowers
Kent and Joyce Stork
2501 E. 23rd Ave. S.
Fremont, NE 68025
402-721-1478
E-mail: kents@tvsonline.net
9:00 – 5:00 Monday through Saturday; closing at 1:00 on Saturdays June, July, and August
African violets,growing supplies, some other gesneriads, fresh flowers and plants.
www.kentsflowers.com
(fresh flowers only - no African violets)

Dave's Violets
David Harris
1372 S. Kentwood Ave.
Springfield, MO 65804-0220
417-887-8904
E-mail: plantman@ipa.net
By appointment only.
Sinningias, African violets and other gesneriads and supplies.
www.davesviolets.com

Patty's Plants and Antiques
Patty Daniel
920 Millington
Winfield, KS 67156
620-402-6282
E-mail: patty@ppa.kscoxmail.com
1:00 PM – 5:30 PM Tuesday – Saturday, or by appointment
African violets, other gesneriads, begonias, ferns, miniature plants for container gardens, plant supplies, antiques.
www.pattysplantsandantiques.com

JoS Violets
Joanne Schrimsher
2205 College Dr.
Victoria, TX 77901
361-575-1344
E-mail: josviolets@yahoo.com
Please call or email for an appointment.
African violets, episcias, chiritas, and supplies.
www.geocities.com/josviolets

Jan's Workshop
Janice Davidson
941 FM 2377
Red Oak, TX 75154
972-617-1186 (home)
214-718-1186 (cell)
E-mail: chiefrond@aol.com
Call for appointments.
Ribbons and rosettes for AVS shows.

Hill Country African Violets and Nursery
Ken Froboese
32005 I. H. 10 West
Boerne, TX 78006
830-249-2614
Fax: 830-249-8658
8:00 AM-6:00 PM, 7 days a week.
NO LISTS – NO SHIPPING.
Complete retail nursery with eleven greenhouses. Violets, supplies, other gesneriads, herbs, orchids, lots of other plants.
Visitors welcome.

Violet Perfection by Gini
Gini McCanne
1420 Oxford Ave.
Claremont, CA 91711
909-624-8331
E-mail: violetperfection@verizon.net
By appointment only.
African violets, supplies, self-watering ceramic and plastic pots.
Catalog ($3.50) upon request.

The Velvet Leaf
Lynn Lombard
790 Ridgecrest Drive
Colfax, CA 95713
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By appointment only.
Retail African violets, streps, episcias, and FREE spectacular Sierra and valley views!
Just five minutes off I-80 between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe in Gold Rush Country.
www.thevelvetleaf.com

Aca's Violet-Tree
John and Doris Brownlie
80-600 Silvercreek Blvd.
Mississauga, Ont., Canada L5A 2B4
905-270-6776
E-mail: jtbrownlie@idirect.com
Anytime by appointment.

Green Thumb Press
Nancy Robitaille
10065 Lausanne Ave.
Montreal, QC, Canada H1H 5B1
514-324-1969
E-mail: greenthumbpress@yahoo.com
Open 7 days a week by appointment only.
Book: Insects, Pests and Diseases of the AV Family by Nancy Robitaille. Also AV leaves.
www.greenthumbpress.com

Bloomlovers
Tina Drouin
6920 St-Francois Nord
Sherbrooke, QC Canada J1C 0A5
819-276-0561
E-mail: bloomlovers@videotron.ca
Call ahead for appointment.
African violets. Coming soon - Streptocarpus and Episcias.
www.bloomlovers.com

Root Rot

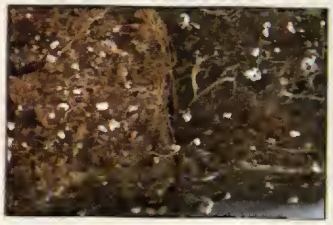
By Janet Stromborg

Many of us have seen our violets wilt when we have waited too long to water them. The problem is easily fixed by giving them a drink. However, when a plant is wilted, even though the soil has not dried out and in fact is quite damp or even wet, it's likely the problem is a dead root system and roots that are beginning to rot.

Root rot is a fairly common problem in my growing conditions. It is often the result of keeping a plant too wet, and too cold, for long periods during the colder months of the year. In this kind of environment, the tiny feeder roots that deliver water to the crown can die, and then the plant dies from lack of water, even though there is plenty of moisture in the soil.

This little semiminiature violet was suffering from root rot after a month of being too cold and wet in my Wisconsin basement. Its root system died and turned brown. Without healthy living roots that should be white or cream colored, the plant was desiccating even though the soil was wet. "Brown dead roots on left/white healthy roots on right".

Root Rot-Symptoms



Root Rot-Roots Compared

By acting fast, I was able to rescue this plant. But, if I had ignored the problem and hoped that it would recover on its own, the plant might well have continued to lose outside leaves until there were none left. The crown on this ailing violet was still crisp, unlike the badly wilted and drooping outside leaves, so there was lots of life left in it.

To save it, I removed the soil, the blooms, and the limp outside leaves. With an Exacto hobby knife, I scraped the trunk until the brown and dead roots were all removed, then lightly dusted the trunk with Rootone rooting hormone.

Root Rot-Dusted Trunk

I then repotted the crown in barely-moist potting medium, covering the trunk all the way up to the bottom tier of leaves.

Root Rot-Repotted

Finally, I slipped the pot and plant inside a plastic bag, though any covered clear container will work as well. I kept it there for several weeks until it had recovered and grown a new root system.

Root Rot-Bagged

New growth in the crown was an indicator that the plant had taken root and was making a full recovery. I removed the plant from its bag and kept it evenly damp. I was careful not to let the soil dry out completely for several more weeks, until the pot was once again filled with white healthy roots.

Planting by Moon Signs

All tables use Eastern Time. Please calculate the difference between your time zone and Eastern.

Moon in Aries

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds, pests, etc., and for cultivating.

Moon in Taurus

Productive and moist, earthy and feminine. Used for planting many crops, particularly potatoes and root crops, and when hardiness is important. Also used for lettuce, cabbage, and similar leafy vegetables.

Moon in Gemini

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds and pests, and for cultivation.

Moon in Cancer

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. This is the most productive sign; used extensively for planting and irrigation.

Moon in Leo

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. This is the most barren sign, used only for killing weeds and for cultivation.

Moon in Virgo

Barren and moist, earthy and feminine. Good for cultivation and destroying weeds and pests.

Moon in Libra

Semi-fruitful and moist, airy and masculine. Used for planting many crops and producing good pulp growth and roots. A very good sign for flowers and vines. Also used for seeding hay, corn fodder, etc.

Moon in Scorpio

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Nearly as productive as Cancer; used for the same purposes. Especially good for vine growth and sturdiness.

Moon in Sagittarius

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for planting onions, seeding hay, and for cultivation.

Moon in Capricorn

Productive and dry, earthy and feminine. Used for planting potatoes, tubers, etc.

Moon in Aquarius

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for cultivation and destroying noxious growths, weeds, and pests.

Moon in Pisces

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Used along with Cancer and Scorpio, especially good for root growth.

May Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase	
1 Fri	Leo	Fire	Barren	2nd	4:44 pm
2 Sat	Leo	Fire	Barren	2nd	
3 Sun	Virgo	Earth	Barren	2nd	
4 Mon	Virgo	Earth	Barren	2nd	
5 Tue 5:51 am	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
6 Wed	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
7 Thu 12:48 pm	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
8 Fri	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
9 Sat 9:49 pm	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	3rd	12:01 am
10 Sun	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	3rd	
11 Mon	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	3rd	
12 Tue 9:09 am	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
13 Wed	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
14 Thu 10:01 pm	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
15 Fri	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
16 Sat	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
17 Sun 10:17 am	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th	3:26 am
18 Mon	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th	
19 Tue 7:30 pm	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
20 Wed	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
21Thu	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
22 Fri 12:40 am	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
23 Sat	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
24 Sun 2:34 am	Gemini	Air	Barren	1st	8:11 am
25 Mon	Gemini	Air	Barren	1st	
26 Tue 2:58 am	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	
27 Wed	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	
28 Thu 3:44 am	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
29 Fri	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
30 Sat 6:17 am	Virgo	Earth	Barren	2nd	11:22 pm
31 Sun	Virgo	Earth	Barren	2nd	

June Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase	
1 Mon 11:17 am	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
2 Tue	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
3 Wed 6:43 pm	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
4 Thu	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
5 Fri	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
6 Sat 4:23 am	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd	
7 Sun	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	3rd	2:12 pm
8 Mon 3:59 pm	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
9 Tue	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
10 Wed	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
11 Thu 4:52 am	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
12 Fri	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
13 Sat 5:32 pm	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd	
14 Sun	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd	
15 Mon	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th	6:14 pm
16 Tue 3:51 am	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
17 Wed	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
18 Thu 10:20 am	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
19 Fri	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
20 Sat 1:00 pm	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
21 Sun	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
22 Mon 1:12 pm	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	3:35 pm
23 Tue	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	
24 Wed 12:50 pm	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
25 Thu	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
26 Fri 1:46 pm	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
27 Sat	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
28 Sun 5:24 pm	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st	
29 Mon	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	7:28 am
30 Tue	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	

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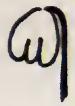
BLOSSOM TYPES

The variety of colors, shapes, and forms of the African violet blossom has increased over the years. Some of the more important are the following:



Bell: Single blossoms with a bell shape.

Chimera: Blossoms, with stripes that radiate from the center, pinwheel.

Double: Blossoms with at least two layers of petals.

Fantasy: Blossoms are splotched, streaked or rayed with contrasting color or deeper shade of the same color. The blossoms can be of any kind or shape.

Fringed: Blossoms have heavily serrated or fringed outerlobes. The blossoms can be any kind or shape.

Edged: Blossom can be any shape. Lobes of the blossoms are edged with any color. **Geneva or Geneva edged:** Lobes of the blossoms are edged with white.

Multicolor: Blossoms with two or more colors.

Semidouble: Blossoms that possess more than the standard five lobes, such as those blossoms with a crest or tuft at the center, but less than a full second row of petals. Blossoms may appear single.

Single: Blossoms have five lobes, with two upper lobes that are usually smaller than the three lower ones.

Star: Blossoms have five lobes of about equal size and distance from one another. The blossoms can be single, semidouble, or double. The double star has extra layers of petals but maintains the star form.

Two-tone: Blossoms having two or more shades of a color.

Wasp: Blossoms are single and each lobe is very narrow.

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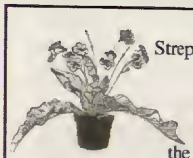

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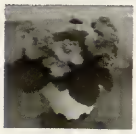

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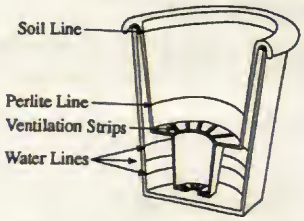

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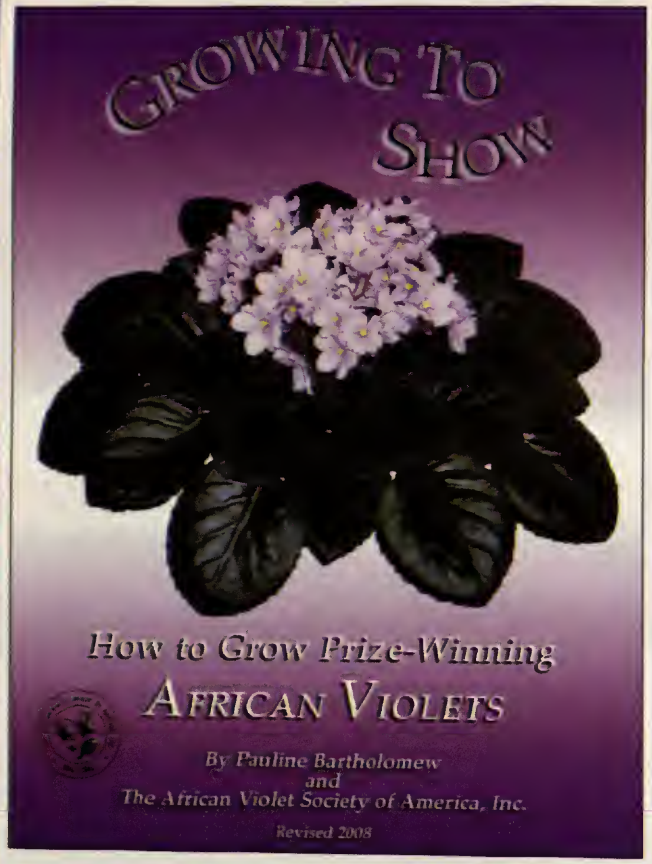

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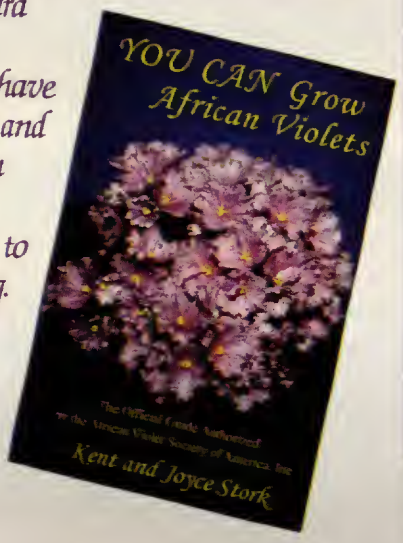

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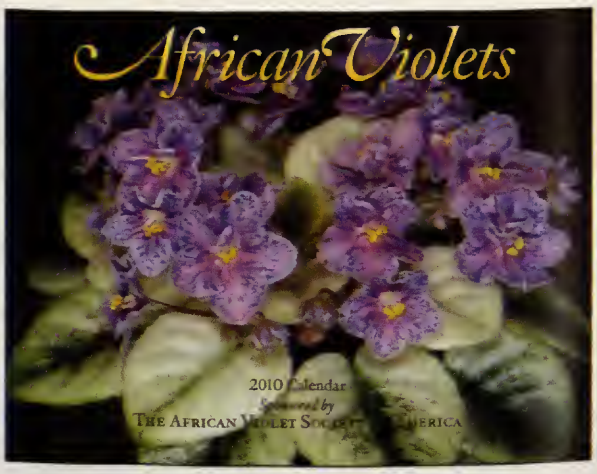

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